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The Week

DURING the past week, Europe has continued to balance on the dividing line between peace and war. As they have so often done in the past, the French sought with all their power to persuade the British that wisdom required the firmest possible attitude against Germany; as so often in the past, the British have reluctantly decided to go at least part way with the French. After sending the Germans a note of protest on the repudiation of the Versailles Treaty, a note that both Paris and Moscow instantly denounced as inexcusably weak, the British agreed to participate in something that would look, at any rate, like a "united front" as among themselves, the French and the Italians. Before Sir John Simon and Captain Eden made their visit to Berlin, a conference of the three former Allies was held; and it was also agreed that another conference would take place after the British diplomats' visits to Warsaw, Prague and Moscow, so that they could report on results. If first news of Hitler's conversations with Sir John Simon is confirmed, the situation is indeed about as bad as it could be. Hitler repeated all that he has heretofore said about the "menace" of Russia, implying that Germany still looks toward the East and is still determined upon a policy that neither France nor Russia can possibly accept.

MUSSOLINI, as was to be expected, responds to the crisis with an immediate military gesture. On the heels of the news that Germany proposes to build a huge navy as well as a vast army, the Italian dictator summoned an extra 250,000 soldiers to the colors. Including Fascist militia, he now has almost a million men under arms. Probably more important than any other development of the week is the news that Poland is "taking a grave view" of Germany's tearing up the Treaty. A fortnight ago Germany had two friends: Poland and Japan. Last week, Japan acted to settle her quarrel with Russia, which is another way of saying that she moved to get out of her understanding with Germany—an understanding that began to look like a noose around her own neck. Is Poland doing the same thing? If so, that fact is the best guarantee against an early war that has appeared in Europe for many a long day.

IN THE field of domestic affairs, the work-relief bill, the bonus, N.R.A. reorganization, former President Hoover and the results of the dust storms in the Middle West have provided the outstanding news of the past seven days. The administration's pressure, which partly consisted, it is reported, in the threat to withhold public-works money from the states of recalcitrant Senators, was at last successful; the work-relief bill went through the Senate by a safe majority, its only objectionable feature being an amendment for the further remonetization of silver that would supposedly make possible a billion-dollar expansion in the currency. It is safe to predict that this amendment will disappear in conference between the two Houses and that the final form of the bill will satisfy the President. It is certainly better that the money should be spent, even under the President's objectionable provision for a $50-a-month wage, than that it should not be spent at all. Inflation also appeared in another piece of legislation this week, the House having adopted the Patman bill, which would provide $2,000,000,000 for the bonus by issuing greenbacks. The only question of interest is whether Congress can muster the two-thirds vote to repass the meas-

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ure over the President's veto; by that time it is likely that the inflationary aspect of this bill, also, will have disappeared.

THE President has patched up a truce with labor, by giving it "equal representation" with industry on the National Industrial Recovery Board, which rules the all but defunct N.R.A. This act of the President is supposed to be helpful to labor and is in fact about as helpful as throwing an iron bar to a drowning man who is going down for the third time. Former President Hoover adds to the gayety of nations by repeating all his well known views about individualism, in a portentous tone that suggests he really believes there is a chance of his becoming Republican presidential nominee in 1936. Meanwhile, as another vast dust storm made life miserable for inhabitants of half a dozen states in the Middle West, and presaged another drought this year, Secretary Wallace has removed all limitation on planting of spring wheat, with the proviso that curtailment will again be enforced in 1936 if warranted by conditions.

FIRST reports of the conversation between Hitler and Sir John Simon indicate that the German government is trying to kill two birds with one stone: it is trying to prevent the formation of a new ring about it by driving a wedge between Soviet Russia on the one hand and France and England on the other, and it is trying to preserve freedom to carry out the original Hitler policy of expansion to the East. Soviet Russia, Hitler argued, is the real danger to European peace in spite of all her pretensions, and Germany needs to be armed against her. She wants permission to act as the bulwark of capitalism, with the benevolent neutrality of the other Western Powers. To this the answer would naturally be, why then does she not sign the Eastern pacts of non-aggression that Russia and France have proposed? But Hitler has an excuse for this also: Germany does not want to bind herself with military obligations at a distance from her borders. The shrewd propaganda mind of Göbbels could hardly have invented an appeal better calculated to placate Sir John, the circumstances being what they are, on account of the British Conservatives' distrust of the Soviet government and Britain's dislike of too many entangling commitments. But it will scarcely fool them unless they want to be fooled. The Soviet Union's need for peace is too obvious in view of her internal task, and Hitler's own aggressive designs are too well known. This stratagem, if successful, would only neutralize the Western Powers while Hitler takes one bite on the Eastern frontier, after which he would return to take another bite in the West.

NEWS that Under-Secretary of Agriculture Tugwell is to be given authority, in the new public-works scheme, over the land-use program, including prevention of soil erosion, rural rehabilitation, the taking of submarginal land out of cultivation, and perhaps the whole plan outlined by the Mississippi Valley Committee, is encouraging. This ambitious program needs a far-seeing and energetic administrator, if it is to come anywhere near living up to its possibilities. Mr. Tugwell has been effectually blanketed in the other tasks in which he took a special interest, notably amendment of the Food and Drugs Act and formation of codes for food processors and distributors that would adequately protect the consumer. Here is an opportunity to do something, at least, that will have a permanent value without encountering quite such powerful and stubborn opposition from centers of private enterprise. At least, it looks that way at the beginning. When the program begins to take form, opposition will of course develop at various points and the effort may eventually be so cabinned, cribbed and confined that it will come to little. But we wish Mr. Tugwell success and we hope that he will push his arduous task with expedition and courage.

JOHN T. FLYNN, a contributing editor of The New Republic, last week outlined before the Senate Munitions Committee a plan for "taking the profit out of war." Mr. Flynn has long been coöperating with the Committee, and it is understood that most of its members approve, in general, of his views. Unlike the famous Baruch plan supposed to be for the same purpose, Flynn's scheme has real teeth in it. During any war he would take for the government one-half of all profits up to six percent, and all profits beyond that point. Individual incomes would be limited to $10,000 annually. Such a scheme, if rigorously enforced, would go far toward paying for war out of current revenue, instead of through borrowing against the future. It would be unwise to attach too much importance to plans of this sort, and particularly for their value in preventing war. Conflicts do not start, despite the popular impression, because business men expect to make money out of war contracts; they start because business men in two countries, with the support of their respective governments, pursue policies in international trade that are mutually irreconcilable. Despite all this, it would be an excellent thing if some such plan as that of Mr. Flynn could be adopted. If it did nothing else, it would check the prosperous loungers in clubs who keep saying that "a good war" would end the depression. For many business firms depression would begin when war did —as it ought to.

JOHN STRACHEY'S article on page 203 of this week's New Republic is addressed particularly to those who have made up their minds that capitalism cannot work and must be superseded by a new order. He inquires why all these people do not immediately embrace communism. The bad manners and tactical mistakes of communists should not deter them, he says, because of the pressure under which the revolutionaries must do their work and

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the common human frailties of all parties. He suggests that perhaps the hesitation is due to nothing more valid than a disinclination to get into the struggle. There is, no doubt, truth in what he says, and it may prove in some cases to be an effective argument, similar to the exhortation of the revivalist who asks the sinners in his congregation to search their souls and confess. But the communists will become futile if they fall into the habit of attributing any slowness of their growth to moral delinquency on the part of those who will not join the fold. Such an attitude, though frequently expressed by their writers, is really a confession of weakness. Their own doctrine ought to teach them that most people are not moral heroes, and will not support a political movement on the basis of intellectual conviction alone. A party that demands supreme heroism, rigorous discipline and self-sacrifice is not likely to achieve broad mass support, except in the white heat of a revolutionary crisis. Some consciousness of this is perhaps what leads many who oppose capitalism to look for other instruments than the Communist Party with which to carry on the attack.

MR. Strachey's difficulties with the American government last week reached a logical climax of absurdity. Before the beginning of the efforts to deport him, he had planned to return to England at the end of March; but the government now refuses to permit this. It insists that he stay here, at great personal inconvenience and expense, until it has decided whether to force him to return to his home—which is all that he wants to do in any case. Gilbert and Sullivan might have done justice to this situation; we cannot. It is no wonder that Secretary Perkins gave every sign of losing her temper when heckled about this case the other day at a public meeting in Chicago. The blunt truth is that the Roosevelt administration was blackmailed by William Randolph Hearst into proceeding against Mr. Strachey and that Miss Perkins and every other responsible official in Washington is obviously nauseated at the kind of thing into which they have been driven by the President's obligation to, or fear of, the publisher who is now the most unscrupulous agent of reaction this country possesses.

THE legislature of the sovereign state of California offers a splendid example of a law-making group caught in the panic of reaction. Members of that august body have proposed a flood of measures designed to crack down on the labor movement and on every manifestation of radical or progressive activity. This madness, however, is not confined to California. It is spreading, as The New Republic has pointed out before, across the entire country. The national House of Representatives and the legislatures of half a dozen states have proposals similar to the California measures before them, while over a dozen others are considering legislation that would make it extremely difficult if not impossible for minority parties to function. The American people have been slow in waking up to the danger such legislation presents to the cause of civil liberties. In New Mexico, however, a determined labor offensive succeeded in killing a sedition bill—which proves it can be done. In New York a long list of well known liberals are to take part in a meeting held under the joint auspices of the American Civil Liberties Union and the American League Against War and Fascism in Madison Square Garden on April 3 to launch a general fight against this repressive movement which will result eventually in a renewal of the notorious "Palmer raids" that created such havoc in labor and liberal circles after the World War. Similar action should be taken in every city of the Union.

A LARGE area in the Middle West has again suffered from a dust storm that has cost at least a dozen lives and has meant a damage to the soil of many million dollars. In large districts the top soil is now almost entirely gone; it may be years before this land can again be used and wise policy may require that it shall never again go under the plow but shall be used only for grazing. To what extent are man-made conditions responsible for the dust storms and the havoc they have created? Some authorities believe they would not have taken place had not the high prices of wartime encouraged farming operations in semi-arid regions. It is generally assumed that unsound agricultural procedure, carelessness about erosion and failure to rotate crops have had something to do with the decline in the water table throughout the upper Mississippi Valley; and that this in turn had something to do with the drought. No one can be sure, however, that the main cause of the difficulty is not a set of geographical factors that are beyond man's power either to prevent or to remedy. Certainly, one lesson of the dust storms is that we should do everything possible to control floods, prevent erosion and stop the uneconomic use of semi-arid land. It is reassuring to note that this subject is an important part of the plans being considered under the work-relief bill.

THERE is something typically Austrian in the announcement that the Schuschnigg-Starhemberg government has appealed for assistance to a number of former Social Democratic functionaries. Since the overwhelming success of the Saar plebiscite, the Austrian Nazis have renewed their activities against the Christian Social government. Vienna, it appears, looks forward to a repetition of the July *Putsch* and in her desperation is turning for help to the Social Democracy she suppressed in February, 1934. There is no honor in the transaction, no sincere admission of past mistakes, no regret for her refusal to accept the Social Democracy's offer of coöperation against National Socialism in the past. In true Jesuit fashion, Austria's rulers are trying to take advantage of internal dissensions in

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the Social Democracy, to play the right wing against the left. They have offered legalization of Socialist cultural and athletic organizations to several right-wing leaders in return for mass support of the Fatherland Front.

AUSTRIAN labor, however, has gone to the left in a strong proletarian United Front, leaving the few right-wingers without a following. The old Social Democratic Party no longer exists. As Revolutionary Socialists of Austria, it now promulgates a fighting program such as no other Social Democratic organization in the world has dared to adopt. The most prominent of the old leaders, Otto Bauer, Karl Seitz, Julius Deutsch and others, are at the head of the new illegal organization. In uncompromising opposition to the Christian Social fascist regime, they insist on certain minimum demands: legalization of all labor parties, trade unions, working-class newspapers and labor institutions and the restoration of democratic methods in economy and politics. Austrian labor knows that it cannot solve its problems by dickering with the regime of the Innitzers, the Starhembergs and the Schuschniggs. Between socialism and fascism there can be no compromise.

THE latest incident in the married life of art and commerce provides a bit of humor that somehow escaped being laughed into the microphones of the country's radio hook-ups. According to the trade journals, last week had been set aside as Whiteman week, Mr. Paul (Tweet) Whiteman having just completed twenty years of playing roughly the same number, though with notoriously different orchestras. Mr. Glen Gray (and his Casa Loma), another national brand in music, thought to solemnize the occasion by joining those who were dedicating whole programs, single numbers, or simply sock choruses to Whiteman, in tribute to the Master. One can conceive that the feeling of admiration as among fellow artists would run high at such a time. But the program Mr. Gray proposed to dedicate is the sole property of Camel cigarettes, who stepped in at this moment to bring everything up short. Fellow artist or no fellow artist, Camels said, Whiteman is working on the air for that Kraft Kreamy Cheese outfit. People can't smoke cheese, please abandon the idea; send flowers, they said. Mr. Gray acquiesced but did not give up the idea of tribute, his feelings being strong within him. He still had a sustaining program up his sleeve, and proposed to dedicate this. But the program was sustained by C.B.S. (everything seems to be owned by somebody), while Mr. Whiteman broadcasts over N.B.C.; and C.B.S. said, Here now. Business competition being what it is in these days, they said, we would be just as glad if you didn't. In fact, don't. So at least one little piggie, on Paul Whiteman week, went to market dedicating other people's arrangements of dance numbers to no one but himself, as is the custom among artists.

A Word to Mr. Wallace

WITH THE prospect of a continued, though more moderate, drought this year, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has abolished the ten-percent cut of wheat acreage specified in contracts for spring planting, thus temporarily at least putting an end to the program with which it began its general policy of restricting agricultural output. In cotton it faces the difficulty that though it offered the growers options at 12 cents a pound as bait for cutting their crops, the price has fallen below that figure and may remain so. Calculations may be upset, as in other restriction schemes of the past such as the Stevenson rubber plan, by the dual effect of higher prices, both in reducing demand and in enlarging output outside the area of control.

Such practical considerations give point to the sentiments expressed by Secretary Wallace on numerous recent occasions. He has said that aid to the farmers through restriction of output has about reached the limit of its possible usefulness. What is needed now is lower industrial prices, combined with much larger production of industry's goods. This would at once enlarge employment, the wage earners' incomes and capacity to buy, the market for farm products and the farmers' incomes. Secretary Wallace never really liked the policy of crop restriction, and it went against the grain, not only of people in general but of most of the farmers themselves. He adopted it as the lesser of evils, under circumstances that he could not control. He saw the pressing need of trying to close the scissors between crop prices and industrial prices, of providing a larger income for the agricultural population. To achieve this result, the prices of crops had to be increased. But prices cannot be increased, in a system of free exchange, without enlarging the demand or restricting the supply, or both. Mr. Wallace saw no way of enlarging the demand promptly: the export markets had shrunk both as a result of the depression and of various tariffs and other barriers to trade, which could be removed, if at all, only as a consequence of long international negotiations. The domestic market for wheat was inelastic and could not be increased much in any case, and the demand for other farm crops could be enlarged only by industrial revival and a much higher standard of living for the workers. This objective was outside his authority and competence. The only thing left was to cut the yield of the land.

Sensational attacks on this policy, such as James Truslow Adams' stories of paying persons who had never raised anything for not growing crops, are of course absurd. The benefit payments covered only a few major crops, and were earned on the basis of signed contracts specifying a restriction of output in each case below the actual level previously attained, a level checked against census reports and verified by local committees of farmers. They came from consumers, of course, but if the farmers had

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voluntarily restricted output as industrialists do, the consumers would have suffered just as much. No food was actually destroyed except a negligible quantity of small pigs converted into tankage. It was simply a matter of producing less than might otherwise have been put on the market. Conservatives and advocates of the existing economic system have not the slightest excuse for attacking this course, for it is one regularly followed by industry, and particularly so in depression. Nearly every industry has cut its output drastically since 1929, rather than maintaining production as the farmers did, and letting prices fall as much as they might under conditions of free competition. Even since the inauguration of the A.A.A., planned restriction of farm output has reduced it far less than capitalist restriction of industrial production since the beginning of the depression. It is no more outrageous to diminish the supply of food when people are hungry than to diminish the supply of steel, cement and glass when people are homeless. And the result, in the circumstances, has not been wholly bad. Some farmers at least do have a larger income, and in consequence are buying more automobiles, clothing and agricultural machinery.

But losses and risks that accompany the program are tremendous. The New Republic has often pointed out the desperate plight of the sharecroppers in the South who are forced off the land altogether as a result of restriction. Certain groups of producers who have already achieved price parity are now trying to use their new-found weapon of monopoly to drive prices still higher by pressure that it is difficult for the Department of Agriculture to resist. The costs of dairymen and poultry raisers are raised through higher prices of feed, while it is difficult to boost the prices they receive sufficiently to make up the difference. If this is done, an already grossly insufficient consumption of milk and other higher-quality foods is further diminished. Introducing into farming the capitalist technique of monopolistic restriction may in some respects remedy unbalance in the distribution of income, but it keeps the total income inadequate, and enlarges the area of internecine competition among whole industries. We do not blame Mr. Wallace for being alarmed at the possible results of the new program.

But we wish he would devote his powers of analysis much more intensively than he has done to the remedy that he correctly proposes—lower prices, larger output and full employment in industry. And we wish he would take seriously enough his responsibility as an adviser of the President to point out to him what has to be done in order to achieve this result in departments of activity over which Mr. Wallace has no immediate authority. Does he not see that the inevitable result of "planning" by separate private industries, whether exercised in the old way without benefit of law or in the new way by industrial codes under the N.R.A., is to strengthen that very tendency to raise prices and restrict output that he deplores? Does he not see that competition is not now a practical remedy in many industries? After many years of battling against the "trusts," they have become bigger than ever, and even if they were successfully dissolved, the modern technique of production is such that the relatively few big units in a given industry will not compete in a way to produce the desired result. How are prices and production to be administered in the interest of the whole people of the nation? Can it be done by a new sort of regulation, based on coherent planning for the whole economic order? We doubt it, and yet we see no other alternative for anyone who does not accept socialism.

We urge Secretary Wallace to explore conscientiously the implications of the principles he has laid down. We urge him to do it with a practical sense of the very material problem before us, without too naïve a trust in the good will and generosity of those who are conditioned to operate a profit system, and without escape into the cloudly metaphysical realms where his religious tendency sometimes leads him. Achieving an equitably shared abundance of material things on this earth may not be the highest of possible goals, but it is one that Secretary Wallace himself approves, at least as far as farmers are concerned, and it is one that is capable of being achieved by faulty human beings under an appropriate social order, a correct policy and a skillful administration. Not until the American people masters this problem shall we be allowed an opportunity to do very much else very well.

Can We Stay Out?

IT WAS of course inevitable that the critical situation created in Europe by Germany's open flouting of the military sections of the Treaty of Versailles should have important repercussions in the United States. Two schools of thought at once appeared in Washington. Some officials of the State Department were inclined to believe that we should address a note of protest to Germany, on the dubious legal ground that in our separate treaty ending the War, we reserved the right to invoke the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. The other group which, we are glad to say, has prevailed for the time being, has favored keeping hands off on the ground that the situation that has developed is primarily Europe's concern and not ours.

We are far from free, however, from the danger of becoming embroiled. The effort to bring us back into the ranks of the Allies, which has gone on steadily since 1920, will undoubtedly be renewed with greater intensity. Stress will be laid upon the fact that Germany and Japan have (or had until very recently) a close understanding, that relations between the United States and Japan are not good and that the friend of your enemy is also your enemy. All the old arguments will be brought out, dusted off and tried once again. For this reason American public opinion should consider these argu-

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ments while there is still time to do so dispassionately.

The notion that we are under any sort of treaty obligation to take steps against Germany is of course such utter nonsense that it is hardly worth mention. The United States refused to approve the Treaty of Versailles and declined to enter the League of Nations precisely because we wished to take no further responsibility in the European situation. That the separate treaty written by us as a means of keeping out should now be brought forward as a reason for going in is certainly one of the grimmest jokes of this generation.

No one would be so foolhardy as to suggest that the United States should deliberately participate in another European war for the purpose of reaffirming the Allied victory of 1918 and imposing upon Germany peace terms presumably even more disastrous than those written in Paris. The only argument that will be advanced is that by rejoining the Allies the United States can prevent a new war. Germany, we shall be told, will remember how America turned the tide in 1918, and once she knows that we are again supporting the coalition against her, she will drop all her mad dreams.

Is there any reason to believe that this argument is a sound one? We are aware of none. The forces that are making for war in Europe are of a character that could not be fundamentally altered by the addition or subtraction of a single foe on either side. And beyond this, Germany would count heavily on the well known isolationist sentiment of the United States and particularly of the Middle West. German diplomats would argue that whatever the government at Washington might say, the American people would rise up in revolution before they would again permit their sons to be sent to die on European battlefields. And still further, it is a fact of international psychology that no European nation can or will, in advance, take adequate account of America's potential strength. In the last war, this was just as true of the Allies as of the Central Powers. It is still true today.

On the other side of the picture, it must be remembered that Germany's present desperate frame of mind did not create itself out of nothing. It rose after more than a decade of deep suffering imposed upon the German people by the victorious Allies. Given misery enough, a population will revolt no matter how hopeless that revolt may be. If the United States should now at last become a guarantor of the Versailles system, the beneficiaries of that system, and the French in particular, would be doubly confirmed in their resolution to maintain as much as possible of the injustice, the economic, racial and political dislocation, the Treaty brought about. Such a condition would guarantee to produce war even if there were no other reason for one.

Under these circumstances, we believe that the United States can best serve the cause of peace and the future welfare of all mankind by dissociating itself as completely as possible from the danger of war in Europe, in Asia and everywhere else. We believe that our national policies which carry with them the danger of conflict, such as the attempt to continue the pretense of an "Open Door" in the Far East, should promptly be abandoned. But this is not enough. The experience of 1914-17 showed us that even the attempt to maintain the rights of a neutral can bring us into war only a few months after a national referendum of the electorate has gone the other way. We believe therefore that Congress should give careful consideration to legislation of the sort the Senate Committee investigating the munitions business is now drafting.

This legislation follows the lines laid down recently by Mr. Charles Warren. The essential points of such legislation are: no attempt to establish moral judgments regarding "aggressor nations" or their victims; a complete embargo on the export of arms or other war materials; an embargo on loans made directly or indirectly to the nations at war; a strict understanding that the United States assumes no responsibility for the safety of American ships entering the war zone, or for the safety of American citizens on alien ships, under the same conditions. To make it thoroughly effective, the policy also requires that we reduce our fleet to the size, and to the types of vessels, that will make it available for defensive purposes only—a policy the exact opposite of the one the Roosevelt administration is now pursuing.

The general policy implied here will be criticized, of course, as isolationist; as turning our back upon a suffering world, as failure to do all that we possibly can do to make an end of the horror of armed combat. This is a case, however, where statesmanship requires that we look beyond emotional appeals to the hard reality. Reality tells us that in the European war that looms ever nearer, there is little if any reason to draw moral distinctions between the two groups of combatants; that whatever the high purposes with which any nation may enter a war, these are quickly dissipated under the pressure of events; and that another world holocaust would probably mean the destruction of Western civilization as we have known it in the past.

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The Issue Sharpens[1]

THE CHIEF difference between the United States of 1933 and the United States of 1935 appears to me to consist in a perceptible sharpening of every political issue. Slowly but surely the real decisions that confront the American people are becoming apparent, and one by one men and women are taking their chosen parts.

There is apparent a steady process of polarization by which the human atoms of that most atomistic thing, American society, are being attracted to the opposing political poles of left and right. This polarization process is anything but complete; indeed, it is hardly too much to say that it is only beginning. From now onwards, however, I venture to prophesy, it will go forward without interruption under the inexorable pressure of events.

It is not that, superficially at any rate, the pressure of the economic situation has increased since 1933. On the contrary, there has clearly been a perceptible degree of economic revival for the American property-owning classes. Their panic fears, which still existed eighteen months ago, of some immediate and unimaginable collapse of the capitalist system (fears, or hopes, which, incidentally, no Marxist ever shared) have been dissipated. It is evident to the American capitalists that by a combination of inflationary price-raising designed to restore profits, and social services designed to take the edge off working-class intransigence, they still have an opportunity to patch up their system.

But, and this is the most striking impression I get, a patched and limping system is all that the American capitalists themselves are now looking forward to. They realize that for American capitalism it never can be "glad, confident morning again." Never again can there be the exuberance of the 1920's. All that the American capitalists can now expect or hope is a reconstitution of their system, heavily doped with the powerful and dangerous stimulant of inflation and supported by the crutch of social services.

This new-found belief of the American capitalists, and of their spokesmen, who see social service as a cure-all for the troubles of the capitalist system, provides some amusement for the English visitor. I cannot help recollecting that in 1928, when I first visited this country, my ears were positively deafened by denunciations of the British "dole." Unemployment insurance, health insurance, old-age pensions, the whole structure of social services that had been built up in Britain, were, I was told, ruining my once glorious country. "The moral fiber of the British people" was being irrevocably sapped by the dole; British industry was sinking beneath the frightful burden of taxation made necessary by unemployment and health-insurance payments; all inducement to thrift and prudence had been taken away by old-age pensions; nothing but ruin faced my unfortunate country as a result of the establishment of this monstrous system of social services. Today, however, I find capitalist opinion in America taking a very different view. When I venture to elucidate the causes that, it seems to me, are making for an increasing instability in any capitalist revival, I am frequently rebutted by members of my audience, or by other speakers in debates, with the argument that all these difficulties will be solved by a system of social services similar, or superior, to that of Great Britain.

The problem of increased mass purchasing power will be solved, I am told, by a great system of pensions and insurances. This will set the wheels of industry turning and so will absorb the unemployed. What Great Britain has done, America can do, and do better. American capitalism in its old crude and cruel form has, I am told, already been abolished, but this is no reason for instituting socialism. A new system, a social-service state, is being built up; and this provides the real solution.

I have, unfortunately, to inform Americans (and in this at least I can speak dogmatically) that this new and flattering view of the institutions of my country is just as mistaken as, and indeed far more mistaken than, their former and unfavorable view. It was very great nonsense to talk about the dole sapping the moral fiber of the British workers; but it is even greater nonsense to talk about unemployment insurance (note the change in terminology) providing a cure for the monstrous insanities of capitalism. The truth of the matter is that a system of social insurances such as has been built up in Great Britain can, at the very most, provide a crutch, by means of which a limping capitalist system can struggle along. I do not deny for a moment that the American system is now in need of such a crutch, and that the best thing its managers can do is to provide one. But crutches do not cure weak legs.

Moreover, it remains to be seen whether, under the very different conditions that face American capitalism, a system of social services comparable to that of the British can be built up. The British system dates from the coming to power of a Liberal government in 1908. Hence it is a quarter of a century old. During that time it has only been built up with the very greatest difficulty and by an

[1] This article is the fifth of a special group by various writers, prepared at the invitation of The New Republic in commemoration of its twentieth anniversary. An editorial discussing the points on which we differ with Mr. Strachey appears elsewhere in this issue.—THE EDITORS.

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endless process of trial and error. If my memory serves me, the Unemployment Insurance Act which came into effect in the autumn of 1934 was the twenty-fourth Act amending the original Unemployment Insurance Act. Nor has any finality been reached today. The administration of unemployment insurance, in particular, gives rise to constant friction and difficulties. If the rates of unemployment insurance are fixed at any point that satisfies even the most meager criterion of human need, and if the inevitable provision of the scheme that denies benefit to any man who is not ready to accept almost any kind of work, at almost any rate of pay, is not operated with the utmost severity, unemployment insurance must have a most marked effect in stiffening wage rates. Unemployment insurance enormously strengthens the bargaining power of the workers. It, more than anything else, produces that "inelasticity" of wage rates about which British capitalist economists do not cease to complain.

Now the inelasticity of wages never means, in capitalist discourse, an inability of wage rates to move upwards. No capitalist economist has ever been known to complain about that. What inelasticity means is that the workers are able, for one reason or another, to prevent money wage rates from moving downward, as and when prices fall. Moreover, as every Marxian knows, the capitalist economists are correct in maintaining that capitalism can work only if real wages can be prevented from rising.

I know that this runs counter to Brain Trust economics. The Brain Trusters, I dare say quite sincerely, think, or at any rate thought, that it would be possible to solve the difficulties of capitalism by perpetually raising real wages. I do not know whether they have yet discovered their error in theory. They have certainly discovered it in practice, in the sense that their practical policy has resulted in a real wage decrease instead of increase. (See Donald Richberg's report on the New Deal issued in August, 1934, in which he showed that in the previous twelve months wages had risen 8 percent, but that cost of living had risen 9.6 percent.)

Now I am far from denying that Americans, as they see their country beginning to set up a system of social services, can learn from British experience. On the contrary, they should be able to learn most valuable lessons from our experience. But if they will look dispassionately at what has happened in Britain, they will be driven to the conclusion that the main lesson they can learn is that social services provide no solution whatever to the basic difficulties of the capitalist system.

I cannot but believe that most American liberals must be aware of this fact. They must know that not only the British, but also the German, experience of social services proves that they provide no solution whatever to the crisis created by capitalism. It is, perhaps, the more or less reluctant realization of this fact that accounts for that slow but perceptible taking of sides, for or against the capitalist system, which appears to be taking place in America today. There are, however, many American liberals who, while seeing the futility of the alleged social-services solution, are yet unwilling to coöperate with the main, organized, anti-capitalist force, namely, the American Communist Party.

It may be worth while to examine the motives that restrain many liberals both in America and in Britain from such a course. What such persons tell us, and no doubt tell themselves, is that they cannot coöperate with the communists because the communists, and in particular the communists of their own country, are "impossible." They then recount a long series of alleged communist "blunders." These blunders consist in what the speakers consider to have been errors in political tactics, errors in good manners or good taste, or absurdities of speech, committed by the Communist Party, or by individual communists.

Now there seem to me to be several things to be said about the question of communist mistakes. The first and simplest is, of course, to say that since communists are (despite the view of Mr. Hamilton Fish, Mr. Hearst, Father Coughlin, etc.) human beings, they make mistakes. The hesitant liberal will, however, prolong his hesitations indefinitely if he waits until he has found a political party, or group of men, who do not make mistakes.

The hypothetical liberal would, I suspect, continue by saying that it seemed to him at any rate, that the communists make a quite exceptional number of mistakes, and that these mistakes are of an exceptionally irritating and damaging character. I believe this to be a misconception. Two circumstances, however, give the argument plausibility. In the first place, communists are attempting a political task that is incomparably more difficult than any attempted by the other political parties. To discover, and then stick to, the correct line is a task of quite a different order of difficulty from that attempted by any of the other political parties. The communists must always look to the end of the story, and they must often sacrifice immediate advantages in order to attain those distant ends.

A second and less fundamental reason for communist "mistakes" is the conditions in which revolutionary work is necessarily done. Calm, cultivated and leisured persons criticize most severely the quality of the books, newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, et cetera, that they publish. It is true that the quality of these publications often falls far short of perfection. But I sometimes wonder what these severe critics would do if they were asked to work in the almost incredibly adverse conditions in which such work must be done. The lack of money, the incredible overwork of the personnel, the lack of adequate office space, of proper technical facilities and the vast, immovable opposition of every vested interest would, I fancy, disconcert them consid-

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erably. They might even understand that the miracle is that communist books, periodicals and pamphlets appear at all.

It must not be thought, however, that I am apologizing for the quality of the communists' political work. Naturally, I think that whatever the incidental mistakes of their work may be, they make incomparably fewer mistakes than those made by the other political parties of the left. For the communists' mistakes, when they occur, arise from a failure to carry through the right line. The far more disastrous mistakes of the other parties of the left arise, all too often, from a successful carrying through of the wrong line.

Finally, it is surely worth our while to ask ourselves what is our reaction to any apparent blunder committed by the communists. What do we instinctively feel, for example, when we see some communist statement that seems to us ill expressed, or ill advised? Is our instinctive reaction, "This must be remedied, this must be improved. What can I do to help to set this right?" Or do we feel, on the contrary, "Ah, here is another instance of the communists' ineptitude. Here is another admirable reason for having nothing to do with them. Here is a splendid justification for continuing to stand on the sidelines instead of getting into the struggle." In other words, are we pleased or sorry at any communist failure? If we find that our real emotional reaction is one of pleasure, then I think it is pretty safe to say that our real, though perhaps unconscious, reason for remaining aloof from the communist movement is connected with the very serious personal consequences that adherence to that movement involves. It may be worth while for us to attempt this little piece of self-examination. For over the coming years events will press us all, harder and harder, with, I fear, only the briefest respites. The situation will sharpen. The question, for or against the continuance of the capitalist system, will shoulder its way forward, demanding an answer one way or the other. Nor will the temptation to evade giving an unequivocal answer become smaller.

It will become more and more difficult for anyone who cares at all for the things for which liberals have always cared, to support the capitalist system. The fact that capitalism, as its troubles thicken, is forced to jettison its more civilized features, as the hard-pressed captain of a vessel throws overboard his cargo, is not merely a Marxist prediction but the verifiable experience of all Europe. The pressure of economic decline inevitably exacerbates every friction and heightens every tension both within and between the great capitalist empires. It is not only that class is driven against class: racial and religious majorities are driven against racial and religious minorities, and above all each capitalist society as a whole is impelled towards bloody collision with its national rivals.

These, the predictable and long predicted social consequences of the latter stages of capitalist development, are now being enacted before our eyes. They are steadily, and now rapidly, making the world into an inferno for by far the larger part of the human race. For the great majority of mankind the very question of hesitant abstention from, or participation in, these ever growing struggles cannot even arise. Whatever the working masses may think, believe or wish, they are thrown pell-mell into the struggle by the unrelenting pressure of economic circumstance. We find, above all in America, great masses of men and women being compelled to take the most active, desperate and heroic part in the struggle against capitalism without realizing consciously that they are engaged in any kind of social struggle at all. I suppose that a majority of the American workers who took part in the great strikes of last year were, by opinion and conviction, supporters of the capitalist system. But this could not prevent them from being driven to fight that system in the most positive and determined manner imaginable. Thus the only question for the worker is whether he shall take part in the vast and terrible struggles of our times in a conscious, clear-eyed, rational way, or whether he shall do so blindly, unconsciously and without a sense of his own permanent and abiding interests. This is a question of the highest importance, for unless the struggling worker does achieve just such a consciousness of the real nature of the social and political set-up with which he is faced, he will inevitably become a prey to the hired demagogues of his class opponents and be led to his destruction.

But for the intellectual, enabled by his income to stand above, or rather beside, the battle, the question is quite different. Nothing (until he loses his income) is precipitating him into the struggle. He will certainly not engage in it until and unless he has achieved a clear, conscious grasp of what is happening; unless he has realized the enormous issues involved; unless he has seen that the very maintenance of human civilization is at stake in the struggle with capitalism. And even if he does achieve such a realization, there will still remain the strongest possible temptations to stand aside from active participation in the fight.

For men and women of the more or less comfortable middle class, of the intelligentsia (to use the European phrase), evasion will, for some time at any rate, be possible; and it will be supremely attractive. It may easily be that many of us, and perhaps the least expected, will choose the part of the comfortable agnosticism: "What is the class struggle?" we may ask, and take good care not to stay for an answer. But let us at any rate realize why we are dodging the issue. "Communist blunders and bad manners" may serve us as a most convenient rationalization; but the real motive that prompts us all to refuse to engage in any anti-capitalist political activity is the primal motive of personal self-preservation.

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It is doubtful, however, whether in the long run such quiescence is well advised, even from the point of view of simple self-interest. Their political equivocations did not save the German liberals and Social Democrats; it merely made possible the triumph of German fascism. And even if a complete surrender to fascist-capitalism will, as it no doubt sometimes can, win a temporary toleration for the intellectual, even this will not help him much when the next round of capitalist wars begins. They say that the safest place in the next war will be at the front. To stifle to death in a gas-filled cellar in a war between two fascist powers is very likely to be the ultimate fate of all of us, if too many of us today cautiously refuse to make common cause with all those who are sustaining the struggle against war and fascism.

JOHN STRACHEY.

Justice Holmes

IT IS not easy, so soon after Justice Holmes' death, for any personal friend of his to write objectively about his character and achievements. The attempt at a dispassionate analysis of his career seems bound to leave out the vital spark, his unique and outstanding personality, and at best to reduce him to the level of the one who is writing about him. But his own insistence that we view critically what we love and reverence, and the example of his unfailing courage, shame hesitation before most unpromising tasks. After all, Holmes' work has been before the public for several generations, his *magnum opus* was published more than fifty years ago, and we are bound to ask: what is his permanent or historic significance?

Holmes' life was in many respects a most apt illustration of the Hellenic ideal of the great-souled man who is a child of *eudaimonia,* or good fortune. All the gifts seemed to be his and well used. He was born into the New England intellectual aristocracy in that Golden Day when it still combined the Puritan discipline of plain living and high thinking with wide cosmopolitan interests and contacts, and he was favored with a brain and a body that enabled him to do a prodigious amount of concentrated work day after day without lessening his amazing and ever youthful buoyancy.

The various phases of his life, the fact that he was the son of a famous father, that he was thrice seriously wounded in the Civil War, that he became one of the world's greatest legal scholars, that he was an eminent judge for fifty years, serving his country with distinction even after his ninetieth birthday, and that he continued to the end to express his challenging faith in pithy and heroic phrases, all served to impress the imagination of the American people and to arouse for him unprecedented admiration and reverence. And yet, the frustration that fate has in store for all human effort did not spare him. Despite his great éclat, despite the fact that no other man ever brought to the judicial office his legal learning and philosophic power, he has not so far exerted any highly effective influence on the law and life of our country. He has not, like Marshall or Taney, changed the current of our constitutional law, nor for that matter has he left any permanent impress on any other branch of our law, as lesser men, like Story, did in admiralty or conflict of laws. Holmes was a lone, though a titanic figure, and the currents of our national life have swept by and around him. He was, indeed, one of the last great representatives of the liberalism of John Stuart Mill, of the faith in intellectual freedom and tolerance to which the majority still pays some customary lip service but which a growingly large number, on the right and on the left, openly despise.

Though the statistician, misled by the fallacy of supposing all cases to be equally important, may object, the popular conception of Holmes as a great dissenter is substantially just. On the important issues of our time, on social legislation regulating the hours of work, the minimum wage, child labor, the issuing of injunctions, the open shop and the like, and especially on the right to express opinions hateful to the majority or hostile to the government, almost all his impressive opinions were in dissent. In relatively few cases of social importance did he express the view of a liberal majority of the court. For the most part, his opinions, like those of other judges were concerned with routine cases; and in some of these, for example, on the question of the liability of a railroad for accidents to those who cross its tracks, he represented the individualism of a century ago in a manner that few of his admirers have cared to extol. We must remember that Holmes was reared in the tradition of aristocratic individualism. This showed itself in a certain aloofness and detachment, illustrated in the fact that he did not read the daily newspapers. He had no grasp of, and indeed no great interest in, actual economic conditions. He accepted quite uncritically the old doctrine that, by gratifying their selfish desire for monetary profit, our captains of industry set in motion the productive forces that increase the supply of goods consumed by the masses. The actual facts of our economic disorder, which make the statement of this theory sound almost ironic, did not solicit his attention. But though he did not have the economic knowledge, he did have the intellectual

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power and the true liberal attitude that enabled him to rise above his hereditary class prejudices. Having decoted the years of his early manhood to the study of the history of the law, he came to admit freely that the future belonged to the man of statistics and economics. Having become conscious of his own limitations, he refused to do what his colleagues were doing, namely, using the judicial office to veto legislation that did not conform to their own ideas of economic policy. Indeed, on some social issues his insight was rather in advance of the economists and even of the social workers of his generation. Thus, he very early saw that the problem of workmen's compensation must be viewed not as a question of individual fault but rather as one concerning the total social cost of what an industry produces, including the cost of insurance. Traditional pious phrases could not prevent his disciplined mind from seeing that the interests of workers and their employers were not altogether identical but involved genuine conflict as real as that between competitors in business, and entitled to as much recognition by the law. Indeed, he came to realize that all legislation favors some class at the expense of others.

The reason for Justice Holmes' dissents was stated by him almost forty years ago: "When socialism first began to be talked about, the comfortable classes of the community were a good deal frightened." This "led people who no longer hope to control the legislatures to look to the courts as expounders of the Constitutions, and in some courts new principles have been discovered outside the bodies of those instruments, which may be generalized into acceptance of the economic doctrines which prevailed about fifty years ago, and a wholesale prohibition of what a tribunal of lawyers does not think about right." Judges, he told us on another occasion, are elderly men and are likely to hate at sight any analysis to which they are not accustomed and which disturbs repose of mind. It is this inability on the part of judges to rise above their traditional but partisan views that has made of our courts whited sepulchers from which has emanated no light or healing for a distressed nation but asphyxiation for generous hopes or plans to relieve those who suffer from economic oppression.

Holmes' failure, despite his great prestige, to induce the leaders of the bench and the bar to accept his social and non-partisan view of the judicial function, or to make them see the unanswerable fact that when the people of the United States adopted the Fourteenth Amendment they could not possibly have intended to prohibit all the social legislation that courts have vetoed in its name, may be explained by the very fact that he was essentially a thinker and had no inclination or genius for effective leadership. He was personally respected, but his rigor of thought was caviar to the general, and could not appeal to a profession that is engaged primarily in helping the country's business and is called learned by traditional courtesy. We may, however, also see in his failure the limitation of the old liberalism that appealed to intelligence against organized group interests. For though, of course, judges as a rule sincerely and ardently desire to be impartial and just, they are chosen from the leaders of the bar who have spent years in defending the interests of property, and such experience only strengthens convictions absorbed in one's youth and increases the natural resistance to new ideas. But it is well not to generalize too hastily about social tendencies or to lose hope for liberalism too prematurely. To measure enduring influence in the realm of thought we need a longer time-span than that required for visible practical effects. There are indeed some indications that among some of our younger teachers of law Holmes' ideas are taking root and may well grow to bear much fruit. But that will largely depend on the possibility of the growth of a genuine scientific spirit in our law schools. This requires unusually favorable conditions that will allow detachment and freedom from external pressure, not the least of which is the pressure either to make the study of the law immediately "practical" or to accept the loose conceptions of science that make so much of our social science pompous pretense, devoid of genuine insight or substance.

Holmes' major contributions were at first in the field of legal history. Here he clearly achieved permanent results of great value that can be put beside the work of the great German, French and English masters. There are paragraphs in his "Common Law" that contain more substantial contributions to the understanding of primitive man (who is always with or within us) than volumes of Frazer's uncritical anthropologic gossip. But that was practically finished half a century ago and the number of workers in this country who have followed his footsteps and have tried to build on his results can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Holmes never abandoned his interest in legal history which, like every science, justifies itself by vision or insight irrespective of practical applications. But his judicial duties after 1882 shifted the center of his preoccupation toward the policies of the law. The study of legal history has often made for conservatism—witness Savigny and Maine. It is not easy to resist the illusion that what has been must remain. And Holmes was not subject to the contrary illusion that what has persisted for ages can be safely ignored or easily wiped out by a resolution. He could not overlook those features of human life that have persisted since classical antiquity or the invasion of the barbarians. But he saw that change is inescapable and that the law must therefore be constantly adopting new premises from life, eliminating or sloughing off mere survivals from the past. For this reason he could not share the common fetishism of the Constitution as an inspired or final revelation for all time. Life is an experiment and a constant search, and a Con-

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stitution cannot and should not prevent social changes that lawyers may fear or regard as inadvisable.

He saw very clearly that the grounds of social policy have to take a somewhat inarticulate form. For the apprehension of new elements requires a sensitive perception and familiarity with new details and cannot be deduced from established principles. But the way to guard against reading our personal and debatable opinions into the law is by logical and juridical techniques which make our premises explicit and subject them to critical analysis and scientific verification. The need of questioning first principles is especially urgent in view of the widespread habit of taking refuge in seemingly self-evident moral maxims as excuses for not analyzing the actual facts. For these maxims, being familiar, produce the illusion of clarity. This confusion of law and morality aroused Holmes' most vigorous intellectual protest and he urged that the law must be washed in cynic acid to separate it from its moralistic veneer. Had he participated in the recent decision of the gold cases he would certainly have vigorously dissented from that part of the majority opinion which, confusing the moral and the legal, declared that Congress had no right to curtail contractual obligation, even though to pay in full would have involved unjust enrichment of the bondholders and perhaps the financial ruin of the country. Holmes believed in going back behind pious phrases to the actualities of life.

For this reason it is most unfortunate that a dictum of his, that the life of the law is not logic but experience, has been taken out of its context to support anti-intellectualists and others who in the interest of impressionism and sentimentalism oppose rigorous thought. Holmes, as a follower of Hobbes, opposed the traditional view (which goes back to Coke) that the law is nothing but reason and that all the judge does is to deduce it logically from fixed principles. The law as a growing body can never attain complete consistency but it must constantly seek it to realize its function. It must not narrow its vision but it must grasp its material firmly.

In his later years Justice Holmes impressed a growing number of people as a thinker who was giving immortal expression to basic ideas on human life and destiny. He certainly was a philosopher in the literal sense of the word, *i. e.*, he was a devoted lover of wisdom, of seeing things in their widest vistas under the aspect of eternity. But he did not care for philosophic technique and his expressions were oracular, like those of seers such as Emerson, rather than organized or even coherent doctrines. This makes it possible for different people to pick out sentences or paragraphs to suit their diverse purposes, so that his utterances become ornaments of discourse rather than methods of organizing our insights. There is, however, a very definite direction in his thought.

Holmes came to intellectual maturity at a time when the work of Lyell, Darwin, Huxley and the higher critics of the Bible was shaking men's faith in the old New England or Calvinistic theology. He was in the habit of saying that probably no generation departed so much from the preceding one as his from that of his father. Holmes remained throughout his life essentially an agnostic. Nevertheless, in all essentials the Puritan tradition continued to dominate his mind. Instead of the glory of a personal God he substituted the "unimaginable whole" of reality, which served equally well to teach the great lesson of humility. To accomplish anything in a world that is bigger than ourselves we must accept our human limitations. The great act of faith is thus to recognize that we are not gods. No one who knew Holmes or reads any of his writings can fail to note the tremendous impression that his military experience in the Civil War left upon him. Yet I feel that his glorification of the soldier's faith, the acceptance of the duties of the station in which we find ourselves or of the job that our daily tasks offer us, goes back to his Calvinistic faith; the military phraseology is but a convenient dress. Perhaps also the militaristic philosophy came to him in his young manhood as a corrective to the individualistic economics of his day, as an impressive instance of the claims of the community above those of individual interests.

The characteristic quality of Holmes' thought came from his combination of robust skepticism with a subtle or mystic sense of that which has not yet been or perhaps cannot ever be adequately expressed. Though we shall never be omniscient like the gods, we can and must constantly learn. Always robust in health Holmes, unlike his friend William James, was not much concerned with consolations for the weary soul. The sufferings and agonies of life aroused in him not sympathy but courage, courage to live in an imperfectly revealed world. The ultimate solution is not for us in finite time, but we may cling to that which has value for us; and in putting forth our greatest energy live or enjoy all that is possible for us. For after all, effort is one of the ways through which the inevitable comes to pass. He saw with amazing clarity both the emptiness of dogmatic principles and the myopic shallowness of those who evade the business of thought by burying their heads in the sands of isolated and therefore meaningless facts. Facts presented vistas for him and he was interested in the long perspectives that they offered. But he did not (except in the field of legal history) originate fruitful hypotheses around which facts can rationally group themselves. Though he admired the abstract thinker, he did not himself delight in prolonged abstract thought. He was essentially a moralist of the Stoic or pagan-Puritan kind, sustained by inner courage to face a world in which there were no guarantees of success and where one had to risk his life on one's daily guesses. He sometimes referred to his view as that of a "bet-a-bit-arian."

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Justice Holmes used to contrast the specialist with the civilized man. The former, I take it, is the one who puts all his best energies into some special work (*e.g.*, Meredith in his novels), and leaves the commonplace residue for the rest of his life. Such men are obviously not the best material for biography. The civilized man, however, develops great works as an enrichment and integration of his life. He makes you feel that the art of living is worth while. To have known Holmes was to have had a revelation of the possibilities of such human personality. His conversation and bearing were like a rare music that lingers in one's memory. One is fortunate to hear some reverberating echo of it. It is the function of the great biographer to catch such echoes, and from conversations, letters and scattered writings reconstruct some idea of the original integrated life. I think men with genius for biography will be richly rewarded if they turn to the life of Justice Holmes. MORRIS R. COHEN.

The Riot in Harlem

LINO RIVERA is a Puerto Rican Negro who is sixteen years old. He lives in Harlem and has no job. He sometimes runs errands for a Harlem theatre and has done other odd jobs. On the afternoon of March 19, after attending a motion-picture show, he went into a Kress store on West One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, one of Harlem's principal thoroughfares. He passed a counter displaying hardware and saw a knife he liked. The knife cost ten cents. Rivera decided to lift it and slipped it in his pocket. A clerk saw him and took the knife away. He held the boy by the arm and began to push him out of the store. The boy said:

"I can walk. You don't have to push me."

"Don't talk back," the clerk answered. "You ought to be glad I'm not going to have you arrested."

The clerk continued to push the boy and Rivera protested again. A small crowd gathered around them.

"I told you not to push me," the boy said.

"Don't get fresh," the clerk said. "If you do, I'll call a cop."

"What's he done?" asked a woman in the crowd.

"I ain't done nothing," the boy said.

"The hell you haven't," said the clerk.

A second clerk came up and now the two of them began to struggle with the boy. He clung to a post and began to kick at the two men who tried to pull him away. The crowd became larger. Voices rose in protest.

"What they fighting with that boy for?"

"What you done, boy?"

"I ain't done nothing," the boy shouted.

"They ain't got no right to treat that boy that way."

The two men pulled the boy from the post and began to drag him away. The boy fought and kicked and bit. He bit one of the men on the thumb and the other on the wrist. The man who was bitten on the thumb began to bleed. He shouted: "I'm going to take you down to the basement and beat hell out of you."

The boy was taken to the basement, still fighting with his captors, but less violently now, and a conference was held with a few policemen who had appeared. It was decided, finally, to let the boy go free. He was taken to the back door and turned loose. He ran straight home.

Meanwhile, in the store, the anger and resentment of the crowd had mounted. A woman screamed that they were beating the boy to death and that rumor, spreading, reached a second crowd that had gathered before the store. Threats of violence began to be heard. A speaker started to address the crowd. Policemen reached the scene and tried to break up the gathering. The people refused to move. The speaker continued his harangue. He urged the people to hold their ground.

In the store, now a scene of considerable confusion, the crowd waited for the boy to reappear. He did not and the notion that he was being beaten in the basement seemed to be confirmed. Men in the crowd suggested that they go and free the boy. Women became hysterical. In the excitement a counter was turned over. Some of the employees, becoming frightened at the temper of the crowd, began to leave.

Then, its siren shrieking through the streets, an ambulance stopped before the store. It had been called for the man whose finger had been bitten, but the crowd, its anger growing every minute, thought that it had come to take the boy to the hospital. It began to surge into the store. Three other speakers had joined the first orator and one of them had mounted a ladder. A policeman started toward the man on the ladder and the first fighting began.

With the appearance of the ambulance, the crowd was convinced that the boy had been brutally beaten. It was now well out of hand and the policemen on duty sent in a call for reinforcements. A brick crashed through a window. The spread of splintering glass was lost in the roar of the crowd. And then, further to substantiate the idea that the boy had been beaten, a hearse appeared. Now it was believed that the boy had been killed. The crowd, yelling with rage, poured into the store.

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It was about this time, perhaps an hour and a half after the boy was first caught, that leaflets were circulated through the crowd. These leaflet, mimeographed, were worded as follows:

CHILD BRUTALLY BEATEN
WOMAN ATTACKED BY BOSS AND COPS
CHILD NEAR DEATH

One hour ago a twelve-year-old Negro boy was brutally beaten by the management of Kress's Five and Ten Cent Store.

Boy is near death. He was mercilessly beaten because they thought he had "stolen" a five-cent knife.

A Negro woman who sprang to the defense of the boy had her arms broken by these thugs and was then arrested.

Workers! Negro and White!

Protest against this lynch attack on innocent Negro People!

Demand the release of the boy and the woman!

Demand the immediate arrest of the manager responsible for this lynch attack!

Don't buy at Kress's!

Stop police brutality in Harlem!

ISSUED BY YOUNG LIBERATORS.

How much these leaflets contributed to the trouble cannot be determined. The opinion in Harlem, after the riot, was that they contributed a great deal. Their appearance, regardless of who was responsible for them, was certainly thoughtless and ill advised. With the crowd already in a sullen mood, with the air full of threats and wild rumors, the positive statement that the boy had been brutally beaten, along with a woman who tried to help him, was not likely to restore any calm or reason. It may be said that the flare-up in Harlem would have occurred whether they were distributed or not. It is equally true, however, that the trouble reached the proportions of a riot, and a race riot, only after they were placed in the hands of the crowd.

To believe, however, that the purpose of these leaflets was deliberately to provoke a race riot, that it was carefully calculated and planned by the Communists, is to believe in the stupid Red scare of the Hearst press. That they helped to rouse the crowds to violence is true. That the violence might have been less if they had not appeared is also true. But not they, or any other leaflet, would have precipitated such trouble if Harlem had not already been smoldering with anger and resentment.

To begin with, Harlem is from 55 to 60 percent unemployed. Many of its inhabitants, before the depression, were employed as house servants or as attendants in hotels. Others worked in the building trades, as elevator men, as waiters and dishwashers in restaurants. Not all Harlem Negroes, contrary to the impression to be gained from a number of novels, are orchestra leaders and night-club entertainers. They have been hit perhaps harder than any other group in New York. Many of them have not had work in four years.

Relief has been inadequate. Charges have been made that it is one-third lower in Harlem than elsewhere. Some unemployed Negroes say they have to wait days, and some say weeks, before getting assistance. Relief administration has been entirely in the hands white persons whose knowledge and understanding of the Negro is limited. White investigators have caused much antagonism and bad feeling. There have been quarrels and recriminations and, in some instances, fist-fights and brawls.

As a result of the depression, Negro families have been forced to combine their resources and live together. Congestion and miserable living conditions have resulted. While there is no legal restriction of Negroes to any one district in New York City they are forced to live in Harlem because landlords in other parts of the city refuse to rent to them. Harlem landlords have taken advantage of this situation to raise rents to exorbitant heights. It is common knowledge that an apartment worth $25 rents for $40 or even $50 in Harlem. Some of these apartments have not been renovated or improved in years. Many of them even lack toilet conveniences.

A certain portion of the Harlem population, during the boom, was relatively prosperous. During 1919 and 1920, Negroes living in Harlem took title to over five million dollars' worth of real estate. Most of this investment has been lost. One Negro leader in Harlem states that there is hardly a bank in New York that will renew mortgages on property owned or occupied by Negroes; and, if they are renewed, the rate of interest charged is higher than that charged to whites.

The greatest cause of resentment is the discrimination shown in the matter of employment. Many stores in Harlem will not employ Negro help, chief among these being the three large five-and-ten-cent stores on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street. As a protest against this, boycotting organizations have been formed, among them the Negro Industrial and Clerical Alliance and the Citizens' Committee for Fair Play. These organizations, by use of the boycott, seek to get jobs for the members of their organizations in those stores discriminating against the Negro.

It was these things that formed the background of the Harlem riot. One Negro, in discussing the affair, said he was surprised that trouble had not broken out before this. It has been brewing for a long time. The chance apprehension of a boy, the spread of a rumor that seemed to have a basis in fact, was only the accident that set off the anger of a section of society that has suffered through five years of depression. If the New York City government wishes to prevent a recurrence of the Harlem riot, it had best go to the root of the trouble and not attempt to place the onus of a tragic incident upon any one radical group.

HAMILTON BASSO.

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Washington Notes

More Deflation—The Charm School—Oscillating Mr. Roosevelt—Wanted: Somebody to Lean on—Who Is Boss?

ONE RESULT of the difficulties Mr. Roosevelt's program is encountering at this session of Congress is a considerable diminution in the cocksureness of the exclusively political members of his administration. These gentlemen, after the November election, were somewhat overwhelmingly pleased with themselves. It is not an exaggeration to say that Postmaster General Farley thought (as some of the more caustic among the correspondents expressed it at the time) that he had "the world in a sling." At any rate he and his chief aide, the pudgy Mr. Hurja, widely advertised as a "wizard with figures" and a "statistical demon," certainly gave that impression. Undoubtedly they were convinced at that time, and for quite a while afterwards, that the organization they had constructed was unbeatable and that the reëlection of Mr. Roosevelt came under the head of finished business. Naturally, they still maintain this attitude on the surface, but they know that the certainty of the situation has disappeared. So does everyone else who has any political judgment at all.

It is impossible to tell how great the change in public sentiment is, but it may be said definitely that the blind enthusiasm about the President has become more than slightly diluted. As a matter of fact, I have not seen a reference to his "vast popularity" in a newspaper dispatch for more than a month, even though the more devoted among his journalistic adherents still write regularly of his "personal charm." Without for a moment denying the President's possession of personal charm, it seems to me that these two words have been greatly overworked. They came into use with Mr. Roosevelt's first White House press conference. His manner and manners were strikingly in contrast to those of his predecessor, whose personal charm was noted for its negligibility, and so it was only natural for the corps of correspondents to dwell upon the smile and heartiness of Mr. Roosevelt. But after two years, during which the President's personal charm has appeared in print at least ten thousand times, many people are beginning to shudder at the mention of it. There is rather acute danger that if it is carried much further, the nation will become just plain bored.

A great many reasons for the cooling of the sentiment for Roosevelt are advanced. Some of them are unique and some extremely trite. However, most of those observers who are capable of calm judgment seem agreed upon two things. The first and most important is that after two years Mr. Roosevelt cannot yet be classified as either a liberal or a conservative. I have made this point many times in this column in the past, but it is worth making again because the inevitable loss of standing with both elements, as a result of his oscillation, is becoming obvious. The conservatives deeply distrust Mr. Roosevelt and they will not accept or support him in 1936 if they have any alternative at all. The philosophy he preached in 1933 and 1934, which seemed to saturate the New Deal in its early days, is repugnant to them. And so is the man himself. On the other hand, the liberals believe that through Mr. Farley, Mr. Moley, Mr. Baruch, General Johnson, the Astor and Hearst influences, Mr. Roosevelt is maneuvering to become the conservative candidate next year. The administration's strategy, they think, is to convince the business interests that the President is the one bulwark between the country and a "ruinous radicalism." It is exactly this sort of expedient game that the President has played from the start.

The other cause for the coolness is the recognition that the policies Mr. Roosevelt has been pursuing have not produced results; that his various experiments, notably the N.R.A. and to a less degree the A.A.A., are in a state of collapse; that he himself has lost confidence. These two reasons seem to me sufficient to account for the present situation, of which, I may say, the White House is fully aware and from which no pleasure is derived.

Various proposals for regaining the pre-session psychology have been discussed. Another radio address to "My Friends" is being seriously considered. The trouble is that there is no safe, non-controversial subject that would enable the President to keep from taking sides—unless Mr. Hoover's latest brickbat is so regarded—certainly neither the thirty-hour-week bill nor the Wagner labor-board bill will do. So far, Mr. Roosevelt has avoided committing himself publicly on either of these exceedingly vital propositions. It seems generally believed that he is against them both; that he would greatly prefer them not to be pushed. He is peevish when even a remote approach to them is made in the White House press conferences. Naturally, he would be somewhat embarrassed if he tried to discuss them on the radio; and to ignore them in an address on the state of the nation would be ridiculous. The same thing is true of the bonus proposal, for which the President is seeking a compromise that will make a veto unnecessary. And he can't very well discuss the N.R.A. or any other pending piece of legislation. Altogether, he is rather at a loss to find a dramatic thing to do or say—and he is anxious to get away on his fishing trip.

I think, despite the risk of what the Congress may do while he is away, it is high time he went. The strain of the confusion is beginning to tell on him. He is not having so good a time. The carefree manner is still largely in evidence, but the moments of petulance are more frequent and the confusion is more apparent. I have never felt so strongly as I have in the last few weeks the scarcity of first-class men among those with whom Mr. Roosevelt regularly consults. It is incredible that he does not himself feel the lack of them. So far as the Cabinet is concerned—except for Mr. Ickes and Mr. Wallace—they are mainly yes-men from whom no real help can be derived. As for the heads of the new agencies, not one of them has developed the sort of personality upon which the President can lean. It was thought at first that Mr. Richberg might become the really strong man in the group, but that idea disappeared a long time ago.

Mr. Richberg's chief service up to date has been in making a large number of so-called reassuring speeches to business men, and getting into a cat and dog fight with the labor leaders. In other words, as a coördinator, Assistant President or Mr. Roosevelt's No. 1 Man, as he has been

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variously called, the eloquent Donald appears to be a flop. The net result is that Mr. Roosevelt still has to make decisions that should never come to him at all; still has to deal with details from which he should be relieved; is still enmeshed in small disputes among his subordinates that should never occur. There are times when he actually lets himself go and expresses great irritation at the underlings who run to him with every little problem. But it does not discourage them. And it is not altogether their fault. "It is," said one of them, "all very well to tell you to make your own decisions, but try and do it once on anything save the most trivial matter, and it is delicately but none the less clearly hinted to you that, perhaps, after all the President is the man to take responsibility."

T. R. B.

Washington.

Other People's Money

General Johnson Confesses—Tougher Than Tough —Richelieu Richberg—Note on a Prophet— Who's a Rink-Stink Now?

THERE are some nuggets of self-revelation, if not of literature, in General Johnson's new book[1], The Blue Eagle from Egg to what Mr. Donald Richberg calls Egomania. Out of his boyhood the General is delighted to recall several stories. Here is one:

> At Greenwich when I was about four years old an incident occurred which both my mother and Bernie Baruch insist is characteristic if far from flattering.
>
> She says she heard clods and bricks thumping against the front door. Opening it she found me backed up to it crying but yelling defiantly at a circle of angry and outraged takers of vengeance:
>
> "Everybody in the world is a rink-stink but Hughie Johnson and he's all right!"

Again he recalls: "All I took from this learning period was expertness in using a bicycle pump to squirt water through a knot-hole at teacher's prominent ears from the back of a rough pine shack."

The General was a nice child too. At West Point he belonged to what he calls the Salt Creek Club, whose motto was "Never bone today what you can bugle tomorrow." The members were called tough and liked to be called tough:

> We studied as little as possible, smoked cigarettes surreptitiously in sinks and bathrooms, ponderously discussed advanced writers and the literature of revolt, strove assiduously to make life miserable for tactical and cadet officers, called ourselves Tammany, played politics to keep nice boys out of class honors—and generally conducted ourselves in a manner which we thought was "breaking it off on the tacs" and "raising hell."

This nice child, having become head of the New Dispensation, tell us that "nobody ever fought price-fixing as hard as I did . . . all they [the industrialists] needed was *production* control. That attained, *prices would take care of themselves.*" (Italics ours.)

The flings at Donald Richberg, which gave that gentleman the jitters as he looked forward to the appearance of Johnson's book and led him to write The Saturday Evening Post in protest, are mild for Johnson, but interesting. He speaks of Richberg and S. Clay Williams as two Richelieus of the new N.R.A. dispensation. He declares that they would like to get rid of one of his buddies "because they are never able to put anything over on him."

He charges that the N.R.A. has surrendered to a particular advisory group. What that group is he makes pretty plain. "The plan now seems to be," he says, "to serve industry and exclude labor." Critics of the N.R.A. have been saying that. General Johnson agrees. But the General himself did pretty well by the employers. "These three musketeers," he says, meaning Walter Teagle, Gerard Swope and Louis Kirstein, "were on the job and they walked in and out of my office whenever they discovered anything that needed attention."

Johnson insists that as soon as the N.R.A. got under way, Richberg began to campaign secretly for a judgeship —some very exalted judgeship. Could it have been the Supreme Court?

The General speaks of another buddy. He has his little collection of amazing intellects. He thinks Alexander Sachs is one of the great minds in economics. "Like few others of his profession he has a record of prophesying correctly." With all respect for Mr. Sachs's real abilities, we cannot forget that he was the economist and one of the organizers of the Lehman Corporation, an investment trust that was organized in early October, 1929, to buy stocks at the high point to which the crazy bull market had soared. The General also declares that he and Sachs slipped the provision about naval production into the N.R.A. bill.

The President doesn't go scot-free. "I was wholly and personally responsible for the N.R.A." This does not jibe with the General's declaration about a year ago that the N.R.A. was conceived and put into effect by one mind and one mind only—the mind of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

However, the General makes some recommendations for the future. One of them is that Section 7a be written into the law and not left to code agreement. Another is that the child-labor ban be made into a statute and not left to agreement by code. Another is that minimum wages and maximum hours of labor be also put into laws and not left to codes. This is precisely what the critics of the N.R.A. urged more than eighteen months ago. Instead, General Johnson and his friends in the saddle opposed this and brought the N.R.A. into existence to defeat it. Now they are in favor of putting hours of labor, wages and child labor into statutes. What is left of the codes? Nothing but price fixing or production control or control of trade practices. This is the most powerful argument that could be advanced for the complete abandonment of the N.R.A. The General, after calling everybody in America who disagreed with him for nearly two years a rink-stink, has about come around to where his critics stood eighteen months ago.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

[1] This is not a book review—just a few nuggets lifted out of the mine to keep them from being missed. The full title of General Johnson's opus is "The Blue Eagle from Egg to Earth" and it is published by Doubleday, Doran at $3.—J. T. F.

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The Mystery of Persephone

"PERSEPHONE," the recent "melodrama" by Gide and Stravinsky given in concert form by the Boston Symphony under Stravinsky in Boston on March 15 and 16, proves to be a very moving Eleusinian Mystery. The mysteries yearly performed at Eleusis in ancient times in connection with the nine-day worship of "the Mother" and "the Maiden," Demeter and Persephone, were dramatic representations, resembling the medieval mysteries, of the events in the stories of the two "holy" and "pure" savior-goddesses. Developments of the primitive worship of the spiritual forms of the earth and of the seed, these representations and some of the other exercises of the festival came, under the presidency of the Eumolpidae and members of other sacerdotal families, to express certain of the deepest and most consoling conceptions of the Greek religion. Men like Pindar and Sophocles derived from them immutable convictions of their eternal welfare, in this world and the next. Like the bas-relief of Demophoön or Triptolemus between Demeter and Persephone, now in the museum at Athens, the mysteries conveyed these goddesses' loyal guardianship of their human nursling and the unalterable blessing laid by them upon him.

And the new Franco-Russian "melodrama" imparts in the form of a mystery of Persephone, freely conceived in the manner of the Eleusinia, modern intuitions similar to those allied in the minds of the ancients with the myths of the Mother and the Maiden. The Persephone of Gide and Stravinsky is a divine person, at once the spirit of the spring and the seed and the unfailing human Lover: "She who if men go down into hell, is there too." She is also the human heart, the creative spirit that—periodically drawn by pity into the realm of death and dreams and "the shades of men outworn," temporarily held there and eventually reborn like the springtide, in love and greater consciousness, to the earth and breathing men—lives not to itself.

The poet and the composer have intended their work—a "melodrama" in so far as it associates the speaking voice with choral and instrumental music, but one that partakes of the natures of the ballet and of the oratorio—for the stage. The part of Persephone is written for a chanting mime—actually Ida Rubinstein. That of the Eumolpidus—simultaneously the interpreter of the mystery and the counsellor and companion of Persephone—is written for a singing actor. The chorus participates in the action. And the first performance of the work was dramatic, forming part of Mme. Rubinstein's season at the Paris Opera last spring.

The representation, like one of the evident guides of Gide's conception, the Homeric hymn to Demeter, begins with the scene of the rape. The stage represents the precincts of a temple. It is "the first morning of the world," and the great heart of Persephone, who is playing among the nymphs to whom her mother has confided her, is moved to love. As in the hymn, the rape is precipitated by her discovery of the sweet and deathly narcissus. But in "Persséphone" there is no Aidoneus with his chariot and black steeds. The motive of the descent is the compassion aroused in Persephone by the flower's odor. Eumolpus and the nymphs tell her that whoever looks into the narcissus sees the unknown underworld; and gazing, Persephone views "a people wandering hopelessly, sad, restless, discolored." Advised by Eumolpus that "her youth will lighten their distress, her spring charm their endless winter"; and already "married to Pluto by her compassion," she bids the nymphs farewell, and takes the springtime with her from the earth.

In the unending night of the underworld, she lies clasping the narcissus, seeing the host of those who "pursue—what dwindles and glides away" and, in a death of time, "recommence without end the incompleted motions of life." Eumolpus tells her that it is her destiny to rule; that she must forgo pity. They offer her cups of Lethe and the treasures of the earth. She rejects them. At length the gods send Mercury, who offers Persephone the pomegranate, and "finding in the darkness a relic of the light above," Persephone eats. The savor of the lost earth returns to her; and gazing once more into the narcissus, in anguish she sees the world in its winter and her mother wandering in rags among briars, sharp stones and tangled branches. She calls to Demeter; but her voice does not carry. Then Eumolpus declares that the winter cannot remain eternally, and that in the palace of Celeus in Eleusis, Demeter is nursing Demophoön, who will be Triptolemus. Persephone sees the Mother leaning toward the child over a burning brand, and carrying him in the salt breeze; she perceives the noble lad, "radiant with tawny health, rushing toward immortality." She greets him, who will "once more teach man to plough." Reviving, she sees the day; with love, in joy, she salutes the earth, and her earthly husband, Triptolemus. A chorus, including children's voices, hails the returning Queen as Persephone falters forth from the gates of the tomb. She dances; she plights her troth to the hero; and once more, of her free will, prepares to return to the unhappy underworld:

Je n'ai pas besoin d'ordre et me rends de plein gré
Où non point tant la loi que mon amour me mène;
Et je vois pas à pas descendre les degrés
Qui conduisent au fond de la détresse humaine.

The chorus celebrates the departing Lover; and Eumolpus delivers the precept of unselfishness derived, as at the Eleusinia, from the mystery:

Il faut pour qu'un printemps renaisse
Que le grain consente à mourir sous terre
Afin qu'il reparäisse
En moisson d'or
Pour l'avenir.

As we have said, the performance of "Perséphone" in Boston, like that in London, was in concert form; but even in this partial shape, the work is solid, and very affecting: in Boston, for instance, critics and public were quite in accord respecting its impressiveness. The first reason for this effectiveness is that the poetic work is narrative and dramatic; the second, that Gide and Stravinsky have transmitted the idea through their mediums so clearly and fully that it touches one without the aid of the pantomime. Stravinsky in fact has transmitted the general sense and mode of the piece with extraordinary depth and warmth. His method is the classical one: that is to say, he neither describes with music, nor attempts the cosmic, nor stops to illustrate the word. He writes pure music, letting the gen-

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eral mood of the music, or the speech-recitative of the soprano—which resembles the aria-like delivery of Racine at the Comédie Française—express his subject. But the expression is there, fully; we feel the sorrow, the suffering, the grayness of the underworld, the divine goodness of Persephone, the ecstasy of rebirth.

Indeed, the eminently religious atmosphere of the work flows chiefly from his setting. Elevated in style and mood, silvery and reserved, and with something of a starry brilliance, it is also strong, austere and even ascetic, like a Russian ikon: indeed, Stravinsky's Persephone has somewhat the quality of a Byzantine *Theotokos*. Where Gide has apparently, as in the opening scene, given him an opportunity for graceful and voluptuous music, Stravinsky has (the "laendler" of the nymphs, for example) written music that is willfully uncouth and banal. This is not because he cannot write a beautiful melody, for he can: one has but to hear the second eclogue in his recent "Duo Concertante" to be assured of it. The reason for these banalities is probably either a fierce contempt for the senses, or a sense of the impropriety of an appeal to them in a religious work. The score contains severe and ascetic instrumental combinations: oboe and tuba; flute, tuba and timpani. But it is also full of thrilling music, such as that expressing Persephone's new vision of the light, or the gorgeous, Russian-barbaric chorus hailing the reborn Queen, with its festive drum beats, or the final chorus. Not a reconstitution of music, the work is none the less a very satisfactory one. The style, the diatonic one of the later Stravinsky, containing elements ranging from the Italian operatic to the Russian primitive, is more unified than in "Oedipus Rex." The work stands high among his best later things, with the "Symphony of the Psalms" and the "Duo Concertante."

PAUL ROSENFELD.

The Pictures in Motion

KING VIDOR'S new picture for Samuel Goldwyn, "The Wedding Night," is the firmest bit of drama to come from the picture studios for quite a while. A good picture, never really powerful but constantly fresh and right, it can be touching for minutes at a time without paying for it by directly going maudlin. Except, that is, in the several spots where can be discovered the boot tracks of Mr. Sam Goldwyn, stepping in with his cigar and the determination to have a pitcher with some art in it, damn the cost—witness that last fade-in of Miss Sten's ghost.

We have seen the story before, of course. This time it has Gary Cooper as a broken-down novelist who retires to the ancestral property in Connecticut and meets Anna Sten as the daughter of the Polish-American farmer, falling in love with her during that winter and writing his first good book around the pattern of her family life. The resolution—his wife's return to him from the city and the girl's accidental death in the row with her bumpkin bridegroom on the wedding night—hardly makes tragedy of it, but in no way glosses over the grief inevitable in such matters. Lines, for example, like those of the wife in stating the case for wives—"With you he's got nothing more than he had with me before it wore off, but what he and I have now, after these five years is . . . well after all, five years"—these are enough to give it an air of truth we don't usually expect in films. And this is not merely an occasional factor in the picture. The parts of the novel the writer was writing are lush and empty enough for snickers, but in general things are expressed in such natural terms as to be a pleasure to witness. Not only are the roles given Gary Cooper, Anna Sten and Helen Vinson well carried out, but even the bit parts are shrewdly cast and played. Take the business of the Jap muttering over his fire, the part of the depot master or such accurate bits of dialogue as Siegfried Rumann's: "Better you don't talk to me," he will say, getting hoarse with anger. And all the little character touches, such as Cooper's confession of what he used the bedspread for: counting the patches at night, fifty red and twenty-six black—these, I suppose, all go back to Vidor's own preoccupation with natural things, like Polish families at dinner or at a wedding, work in the tobacco fields (a little out of place as it happened), farmyards and stove-dampers and country roads.

All of which leads up to another and more central consideration, namely that while we may have seen the story, we have not seen the picture before. So much goes into a decently made film beside the story that the usual literary standards are largely invalid. By nature of its brevity and its need to translate all things into terms of moving images, a picture cannot hope to do the same work as a novel: it does both more and less. It may start with a plot that will hold only as much water as a large bath towel, and yet may surround it with a new sort of glamor. By resort to its own peculiar devices it can at times get effects as strong as those of a full novel. And a picture must be judged while these devices are in full play, while it is in motion. Once it has stopped and someone recounts the mere story, some of the most vital things are lost: the color of its setting, its speed and lightness, the play of relations as between the various people.

It would give an able writer a good deal of effort to make up a character with the warmth and feeling of solidity that one gets from Mr. Cooper before his part is played out; and any woman so fresh and sensitive and strong as Anna Sten in the part of Manya must always remain the despair of writers. Miss Sten is awkwardly clothed and lighted in some stretches of the film, and when great conviction is necessary she still seems not to be up to it; but her presence usually goes so far beyond the mere part itself that you can watch her put such mawkish questions as "I wonder what you were when you were a little boy?" and be touched that she should say that. Acting, especially in the films, is to a considerable degree improvisation, and in the same way that a cast such as this picks its reality almost out of the air, a talented director can bring the people and background before his cameras, regulate their movement and cut nicely from parallel to contrasting moods, from spoken lines to choir voices, and in short release the genii from the empty bottle.

Well, the picture is no world-beater, and perhaps I am puffing it up out of shape by so much attention to matters that must hold generally true for any example of good film making. "The Wedding Night" has more natural coloring than most good films, that is all. And I was glad to see it, not only for the usual pleasures of participation, but because it is heartening to see another token

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that pictures can have so healthy a basis in actual experience. Whether or not it is thought successful enough to be copied by the trade, any similar good work, in such an imitative and repetitious art as Hollywood's, is never completely lost: every picture we see today, good or bad, has the advantage of the whole traditional range preceding it, And what I wish sometimes was more clearly understood is that this silly silver screen, with all its tendency to spew forth a thousand and one quick shoddy imitations of anything that strikes pay dirt, is gathering all the time and right under our noses a tradition that is alive and doing well, going forward steadily, with a good foundation in the lives of those who may be fooled all the time and wrong most of the time, but yet the final body of reference for the simple reason that they are the world we live in. I have a feeling that any step in the advance of such an art is rather worth considering now, with just as little condescension as possible, before the whole business has become a stamping ground for those high spirits whose most reverent hope is to uncover a first cause or a quaint folkway, to fondle it intellectually fifty years after the sap has gone out of it altogether. OTIS FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

Who's Greedy?

SIR: In your March 6 issue, referring to the recent decision of Federal Judge Grubb, the first sentence reads as follows:

> The private utilities have employed their usual tactics of using the courts and the Constitution to safeguard their profits and prevent the consumers from getting electric current in larger volume and at lower prices.

This sentence might be worded somewhat as follows:

> The private utilities have made use of their proper rights in this country, where justice is dispensed by medium of the courts, to prevent the greedy and selfish public from wrecking the plants that have been built out of the savings of the thrifty in order that this greedy public might be able to purchase electric power at less than its reasonable cost.

The last sentence of this benign editorial contains the following:

> [If Judge Grubb's decision is sustained] he and the utilities will merely have proved that the Constitution places the private property of a minority of the citizens above the general welfare.

This sentence might have been worded something like this:

> If the Supreme Court of the United States decides that the interpretation of what is just by Judge Grubb is proper and in accord with true justice, the courts will have proved that the founders of our government were unwilling to permit selfishness to have full sway whenever the majority of the people desired to receive benefit—regardless of equity—from a minority.

I do not know of any magazine that compares with your own in its dexterity at using argument by innuendo—and innuendo that is not justified. And I might add that I do not know of any form of argument that I regard as more contemptible. It is normally used only by minds incapable of making logical demonstrations, and who wish to insinuate a point, regardless of the means employed to attain the end.

Knoxville, Tenn. HUGH W. SANFORD.

[The rewording of the first statement that Mr. Sanford suggests is worse than an innuendo, it is a lie. Authorities have proved to our satisfaction—and their demonstrations have many times been quoted in The New Republic—that rates charged by the utilities have been far higher than necessary to cover reasonable cost. We leave to the reader assessment of the bias of one who thinks the public is "greedy and selfish" in wanting lower rates, while the utility owners are merely demanding "true justice" in wanting higher ones.—THE EDITORS.]

How Liberal is Dr. Sproul?

SIR: In answer to Harry L. Kingman's letter in defense of President Robert Gordon Sproul of the University of California [The New Republic, February 20], we would like to present material to corroborate the statements made by Anna Wallace in her article on this University.

In regard to Dr. Sproul's attitude toward freedom of speech, we believe it is significant that the National Student League, the Student League for Industrial Democracy and the Students' Rights Association are outlawed, inasmuch as they are forbidden to meet or distribute their publications on the campus. No open forum has been allowed on the campus despite continual student demand.

If more specific examples of Dr. Sproul's "liberalism" are desired, we cite the following: (1) In April, 1933, no action whatever was taken against athletes who physically assaulted students who were distributing leaflets announcing a student meeting in protest against the budget cut. (2) In the spring semester of 1934, after presenting a series of fascist lectures by von Kühlman, they refused to allow Lord Marley, head of the World Committee to Aid Victims of German Fascism and vice-chairman of the House of Lords, to speak on the campus. (3) While reinstating four of the five suspended (U.C.L.A.) students on the grounds that they were not Reds, he declared them nevertheless guilty of insubordination in petitioning for an open forum. (4) He refused, for a month, to reinstate Celeste Strack because of her membership in the National Student League. (5) The Administration, through the Building and Grounds Department, maintains a photographic record of students who participate in protest meetings and demonstrations on or near the campus.

If Mr. Kingman had realized the implications of these facts, he probably would not have declared that "many people in California who are devoted to the American traditions of liberty feel that he [Dr. Sproul] should be commended and supported."

JOHN L. ROCKWELL,
Student League for Industrial Democracy.
AUBREY GROSSMAN,
National Student League.
EDITH ARNSTEIN,
Member of Students' Rights Association.
RICHARD CRILEY,
Berkeley, Calif. Member of Students' Rights Association.

Jeffersonian Agrarianism

SIR: A common misunderstanding of the program and spirit of the Holiday Association exists throughout the East. The New Republic, in all of its articles touching upon the Holiday Association, has displayed a tendency to ignore our fundamental principles. Mr. Reno has generally been treated as a naïve demagogue. All this springs from an Eastern provincialism and a narrow-minded belief that the Eastern progressive movement, or those Middle Western movements with an Eastern connection, have a monopoly upon progressive economics. This is perfectly understandable, but we feel that it is time the matter was cleared up. I feel it my duty to bring to your attention, and to the attention of your readers, that those of us in the agrarian movement feel that Milo Reno is the direct descendent of Jefferson in his defense of Jeffersonian liberalism. We also feel that the program the Holiday Association has to offer (endorsed at the National Convention May 3, 1934) is direct translation, into modern economic terms, of the economic democracy that Jefferson sought to establish. Such a philosophy is organized and systematic. Such a program has its roots in the soil, and rests on a firm basis. The collectivists, the Technocrats and all other groups advocating absolute mechanization of agriculture and industry have completely lost sight of the underlying Jeffersonian principle that there

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is a balance between the individual and society that works for both individual and social happiness, and that when this balance is destroyed, we have either anarchy or slavery.

The stress laid by agrarian groups upon the money problem is due to sound common sense and indubitably causal association of individual liberty with the existence of money as a medium of exchange. The Board of Directors of the Farmers' Holiday Association, at their national meeting in the fall of last year, appointed a monetary committee, and this monetary committee is at present engaged in a detailed study of all plans for monetary reform. Its report will be delivered at the next convention, and its results published in farm papers.

In the meantime, we are committed to a general program of public ownership of public utilities, natural resources and such basic industries as are best conducted by society. We feel that other forms of production, including agriculture, are bound up with our individualistic way of living. We believe in the extension of the coöperative system in these fields, but we are opposed to state or social ownership. A monetary program that would bring about a proper relationship between the money in circulation and the amount of goods and produce to be consumed would satisfactorily adjust what difficulties we have with production and consumption in these fields. A more fundamental principle than all these lies in the agrarian recognition of private property, where it does not result in exploitation of other individuals, as the basis of liberty. Is this demagoguery or naïveté?

LEON VANDERLYN, Resident Secretary,
Northeastern Division, Farmers' Holiday Association.

New York City.

An Experiment in Labor Relations

SIR: The manner in which one small, financially weak packing concern—the Columbia Conserve Company of Indianapolis—recovered from the depression is full of suggestion for students of the labor situation.

It was the remarkable feeling of solidarity among the workers that enabled the business to survive. Their interest in common enabled them voluntarily to agree, first to a reduction of wages and salaries by one-third, then two-thirds, and for a few weeks to work with no wages or salaries at all. This feeling of solidarity took sixteen years to develop. The final step was the workers' acquisition—through profits—of 63 percent of the common stock. If it had not been for the depression, the workers would now own 100 percent of the stock, and it is confidently expected that they will own 100 percent a few years hence.

For years the now rather widespread trend toward profit-sharing and general welfare provisions had been developed in the Columbia Conserve Company beyond what is usual in the more socially developed concerns. The benefits included old-age pensions, medical care of workers and their families at the expense of the company and the understanding that no one should be discharged because of bad business or inability to make profits. Then came the control of the business by the acquisition of 63 percent of the stock.

By the time the depression came, the workers knew that this company was their company, that they controlled it and that no man would lose his job through bad business. Two of the most efficient men, offered larger wages by competing companies, refused to leave what they regarded as a permanent job. During the last year, the return to profitable business has been extraordinarily rapid, and wages have been restored almost to their peak.

During the depression, a situation of acute interest to students of labor arose. When wages were lowered nearly to the point of extinction, and the life of the business was threatened, three or four energetic workers, who had been trained as union labor leaders, protested and carried on a continuous agitation among the others. It seemed to the great majority in the plant that these tactics, added to the extreme depression, were calculated to destroy the business; and the three or four workers in question were accordingly discharged by the council.

On first thought, this would seem to indicate that the management, namely the council of workers, was in principle opposed to union labor. That, however, was not the case. The management fully realized that unions are indispensable in an industrial conflict between workers and employers. But when the workers own the company, the ordinary situation of employees versus employers does not exist. In that case, the workers are employers and the employers are workers. There is solidarity instead of opposition of interests.

Big Bill Haywood told me years ago, that his labor ideal was for all the workers, including laborers and technicians, to own the business and control the plant. It seems to me that that is the ultimate, though generally unconscious, goal of union labor. The immediate goal of union labor is to increase wages and shorten hours, but the ultimate purpose, if labor is highly conscious, should be an industrial democracy corresponding to our ideals of political democracy.

Aside from the question of whether an industrial democratic experiment, successful in the case of a hundred and fifty workers, can be applied to hundreds of thousands of workers, the unusual social success of this small concern certainly gives to think.

Key West, Fla. HUTCHINS HAPGOOD.

The Status of Army Reserve Officers

SIR: Permit me to comment upon your editorial note [The New Republic, January 2] to the letter of Harry F. Ward, who objects to United States Army Reserve officers participating in the revolutionary struggle in China.

If in this case the War Department refuses to accept responsibility by stating that such officers revert to civilian status when not on active duty they state only part of the truth. A commission in the Reserve Corps of the United States Army continues in force for a period of five years and during the will of the President. . . . Therefore for five years the reserve officer is an integral part of the armed forces of the United States. . . .

In the case of the reserve officers in China, it is my impression after my years as a regular army and reserve officer that a reserve officer cannot leave the territorial confines of the United States without notifying the War Department, whose approval must be had. This means that when engaged in military activities in China, and although blessed with civilian status, the reserve officer is still under the strict jurisdiction of the War Department.

Considering the foregoing, and considering that such actions of reserve officers might involve the United States to our great detriment, it is the duty of the War Department to demand the resignation of any reserve officer before he engages in the military activities of other nations.

Chicago, Ill. HARRY KRIEGER.

Extracts from Letters

THE Pharmacists' Union of Greater New York writes: "A bill providing for the revocation of the licenses of pharmacists for 'unethical or unprofessional conduct' will shortly be brought before the New York Assembly, having already passed the state Senate. . . . The intent of this bill is clear . . . The State Board of Pharmacy, which will pass upon licenses, is selected from a list submitted by the New York State Pharmaceutical Association. This organization of employers, during the strike of union pharmacists in the Bronx, went on record as condemning picketing and union activities as 'unethical and unprofessional'—the term used in the bill. . . . We urge the readers of The New Republic to write to Christopher E. McGrath, chairman of the Assembly Public Education Committee, and to Governor Lehman protesting against this bill which is part of a reactionary campaign direct against all organization of white-collar and professional workers."

An appeal for funds has been made by the National Student Strike Committee, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City. "All of your readers will remember the student strike against war held last April. . . . This year the strike has been called for April 12 at 11 A. M. . . .We anticipate some 100,000 strikers, both teachers and students. . . . We are having difficulty, however, in financing the publication of the printed material necessary to reach all the students of this country. . . . Contributions should be sent to the above address."

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As Panics Go

Panic, by Archibald MacLeish. Imperial Theatre, March 14, 1935.

IT SHOULD be said at the start that "Panic" was worth doing as a theatre experiment. It strives for choral drama; it seeks to put into lean and honorable design, built on poetic forms, a present-day subject matter —what could be more present-day than the unemployed and the banker? And it seeks—or continues the old, inevitable search for—a structure of verse adapted to our modern world and modern stage.

The best thing about "Panic" was Miss Martha Graham's arrangements of the crowd groups, those people in the streets that stand reading the Times Square signs, somewhere aloft, invisible to the audience, in the proscenium arch. A considerable amount of firmness appeared in the pattern that these groups sought to establish for their numerous and gradually less exhilarating scenes.

Mr. James Light in his direction of the play understood the emotional emphasis and the massing of action. To my mind, however, there might well have been less of that yapping effect, that air of incessant impact from everybody. I think that the emotional impression, once we had got the notion of mass drive, monotony of force, et cetera, would have been greater if the various characters had seemed to start somewhere further down in their individual reactions. Certainly there were times when one felt that an emerging force instead of a generally adopted head-on tone of voice would have been more poignant and moving. This applied also to the scenes where the banker is in the midst of his associates. You did not need entire scenes in the same barking manner; once you got that dramatic meaning, you would have welcomed more diversity of reading and more shading in the phrases and in the several roles. This does not apply, however, to the scenes of the banker with the lady. They had much more variety of attack.

The two settings by Mr. Jo Mielziner were among the best he has done. The street, with its plinths of white light fading into a more everyday scene, was admirable. The office scene, with the great flats—well painted—the red table, and the contrivances of lighting, was direct and free, not compromising between stylistic décor and scattered realism. We have here an interesting case of the relation between dramatist and scene designer. Mr. MacLeish as the author of the play has indicated clearly the lines on which he writes it. He has made his choices. Mr. Mielziner accordingly profits by the finality that he can enjoy at the very outset. In most plays the designer is left to flounder among the author's treatments of the diverse scenes.

The story told in the play is of the unemployed, the banker's struggle, love between Banker McGafferty and Ione, and his final despairing suicide. He has held out, he has had pride, character, resolution and so on, and in the end dies; and Mr. MacLeish's crowd returns. From the start this crowd has shown a marked interest in metrical experiment based on Early English. An Old Woman, for example:

> Bellies bitter with drinking the
> Weak tears do you fear the
> Fall of the walls and the sky
> High over you shining there?

In the front of the published volume Mr. MacLeish has "A Note on the Verse." To anyone who ever knew anything about verse forms, the general content of this essay is somewhat obvious; in every epoch it is desirable to discover a pattern of verse that will express current life, et cetera, et cetera. Some very sensible, if rather manifest, things are said, such, for instance, as that "the critic who tells a playwright that his verse is so free as to leave the audience doubtful whether it is prose or verse does not compliment him." Of course, such a critic might as well be saying that you walk well because we cannot tell whether you are walking or sitting. But there are those for whom Mr. MacLeish's point is no doubt worth making. He is quite right, also, to insist that if verse does not exist in the ear, it does not exist.

Such people as have advanced so far as to hear of trochees, iambics and the like, will have wondered already whether we are completely expressed by Elizabethan blank verse. It is a fine passage, nevertheless, that Mr. MacLeish writes on that muscular, spacious, noble, slow, elevated Elizabethan verse, which was sometimes all these things. He then says that blank verse is always "marmoreal" (a lovely word, at least), "an hysteria of statues." If, of course, this happened to be true, it would only mean that Elizabethan blank verse did not even half express the Elizabethans. But it does not matter very much what you say these days.

Mr. MacLeish may, therefore, go on to state that "the voices of men talking to each other in the offices or mills or on the streets of this country *descend from* stressed syllables; they do not *rise toward* stressed syllables as do the voices of men speaking in Shakespeare's plays. Rather obviously, (1) such office, street and mill persons talk in different ways at different times, and (2) there are people outside of offices, streets and mills that also make up America and also speak.

There are in "Panic" a good many facile echoes of magnificence. There are also some tonic and ruminant lines:

> As water pursues on the grooved earth its channel
> Choosing without choice, so man his fortune.

That ought to give the street and office people, not to speak of Broadway audiences, something to chew on.

But take this, characteristic of a good deal of the play all through:

> Even Shelton!
> Dead in a urinal—the gray-haired man—
> Greasy blood on the mopped marble—respectable—
> His father's seal on his watch-chain—shoes polished—
> Dressed decently—not for that though—

The first trouble with such verse is that, while it goes in for stressing the essential, it really ends in mere emphatic carpentry. It is indeed so explicit, unavoidable and whacked that it stirs the imagination only to banality. Theatrically, it tempts actors mostly to lick their chops.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Everyday Life in Hell

THIS BOOK[1] is a year from the life of a war veteran, by German standards an "Aryan," who writes under the name of Karl Billinger. In the spring of 1933, he was a section organizer for the Communist Party; he was living "underground" in Berlin, watching for suspicious faces and shaking off spies by never leaving a subway train until it began to move out of the station, so that nobody could follow him unseen. In July, the secret police at last caught up with him and took him to Columbia House, where he was beaten nearly to death in the course of his cross-examination. In August, after being transferred to a concentration camp that he calls Hubertshof, he was beaten again and was finally set to work in a construction gang, under heavy guard. Early in January, after being released, he went back to work for the Communist Party. His narrative, smuggled out of Germany chapter by chapter, has been translated into colloquial American prose. I hope that it isn't overlooked or treated as just another tract against Hitler.

The truth is that "Fatherland" is not an atrocity story, even though it abounds in first-hand pictures of atrocities. There are murders and beatings with rubber truncheons and wet rawhide whips; there are ruptured kidneys, fractured skulls, kicks in the abdomen, bloodlust, homosexuality, coprophilia, plain and fancy sadism; and all of this Billinger describes without euphemisms, using the language of the barracks, but using it in a queer, impersonal, scientific way, as if he were offering a clinical report. He makes it clear that his own sufferings and those of his comrades are not his reason for writing the story; and certainly they were not my reason for reading it with fascinated attention. *I do not like to hear about atrocities. They are being committed and endured all over the modern world—not only in Germany but in China, in the Balkan States, in Cuba, in our own country—and I suppose it is our duty to bear this fact in mind as an important symptom of social decay.* Still, I take no pleasure in reading the facts that prove this general coarsening of fiber and drying up of human sympathies. The reason I found this book to be of extraordinary interest was that it described something more appealing—the daily joys and sorrows of people suddenly forced outside the law, of revolutionists in an era of counter-revolution. "Fatherland" is a record—and for Americans perhaps a forecast—of how men live as best they can in hell.

It is not, I presume, a work that belongs to European literature. The author has a gift for choosing the right detail, for stopping short of pathos, but he does not attempt anything more ambitious than point-to-point narrative. Essentially his book is a personal document, and one that deals, moreover, with an extraordinarily simple and unified character, a mind without inner conflicts. Long before Hitler, long before the secret police knocked at his door, Billinger had chosen his role in life: he was a soldier, a sort of non-commissioned officer, in the army of the proletarian revolution. He had achieved what Vincent Sheean calls "the long view"; that is, he had learned to look at himself from the outside, from the standpoint of the vast historical process in which he was playing a minor part. Nothing that happened later changed him or broke him. The nearest he came to weakening was during his torture at Columbia House—when, he says, "I was aware of but one racking desire, to be dead, to be dead, to be dead, and to have this over, finished, done." Afterwards, as he lay in his cell, his clothes drenched with blood and pus, the only thing that kept him from suicide "was the realization that within those four walls five hundred prisoners were sharing my fate. It was my sense of unity with the staunch Party workers. . . . They stood it—I could stand it too."

That is the moral of the story and the point to which Billinger returns time and again. The tortures were incidental. The central fact was that they were suffered together, by men who were serving in a common cause: this alone made their daily life possible and even endurable. The prisoners cracked their prison jokes; they passed along hard-learned advice in whispers; they revenged themselves on stool pigons; they argued with the guards and managed to win some of them over. And it is in telling of incidents like these that Billinger writes, not dispassionately, clinically, but with real fire and humor.

There is, for example, the story of the man whom he calls the *Schieber*—that is, the straw boss or the Fixer. This man, a Communist leader, was not merely held "in protective custody" like the other prisoners: he was charged with high treason. Still, he had more real power in the camp than some of the Nazi officials. A good deal of it went back to the time when a black-shirted SS man guarding his construction gang had shot and wounded a doe. All the gamekeepers of the neighborhood demanded that the guilty man be found and punished. The Fixer told his comrades to keep their mouths shut, and they did, even though they were examined by Goering's police and five of them had to spend a week in the dungeon. This incident made a profound impression on the SS men, who did not like Goering's police.

By November, 1933, the Fixer had gained such an influence over the guards, had turned so many of them into malcontents or Communist sympathizers, had won so many privileges for his fellow prisoners, that there was a general upheaval in the camp. Many of the SS men were dismissed; twenty-five of them were imprisoned. Goering's police, who hated the Fixer, decided either to kill him or to make him confess. For two days he was beaten, then for three days more he was confined in a sort of upright coffin where he could not even bend his knees. The police expected him to commit suicide. What they did not know was that the SS men opened the coffin every night, fed him sandwiches and coffee and rubbed his joints with alcohol.

Early in January, the Fixer decided to escape. He was about to be tried in Leipzig, and he was afraid that the facts brought out before the Supreme Court might incriminate some of his comrades. Billinger, who was back in Berlin, and Hans, a friend just released after six months in Columbia House, borrowed an automobile and drove the Fixer to the Czechoslovakian frontier. "I'm not going to stay long," he told them.

Karl and Hans watched him walking slowly down the mountain into free soil. Then they faced about toward Germany. "Come on," Hans said. "Back to the trenches."

MALCOLM COWLEY.

[1] Fatherland, by Karl Billinger. Foreword by Lincoln Steffens. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 282 pages. $2.50.

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Farewell to History

Farewell to Revolution, by Everett Dean Martin. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 380 pages. $3.

SUPPOSE someone wrote a book purporting to prove that religion was a falsehood, a conscious fraud, a futility. Could one take such a book seriously? Would it not still be necessary to explain how this fraud and futility came to be so great a power, and how it could lead to crusades and reformation wars, to witch-burnings and the Inquisition? Or suppose a book was written to prove that private property was a swindle, a curse and a crime. Would it not still be necessary to explain its origins, its vicissitudes, its changes of form and their effects? Or suppose that another book was written to prove that the nation-state is the common fount of all the present misfortunes of mankind. Would it not still be necessary to learn what forces brought the nation-state into being, to whose needs and interests it ministered, and why men were ready to fight and die for it? Trying to prove that a given social institution is "wrong" merely amounts to saying that you do not like it, that it offends against what you regard as decent and proper. The real problem of understanding it in order to learn how to overcome it, remains untouched.

Mr. Martin's detestation of revolutions—all revolutions without exception—is entirely comprehensible. He understands nothing, literally nothing, of history as a social process. He calls himself a liberal, but he makes it perfectly evident that he is of the school of Burke, not of Lloyd George. Even as of the eighteenth century, he is a backward specimen. He regards all civilization and progress as the work of unique and original spirits; the vile multitude, who at the very least provide food and shelter and leisure to the superior men, do not count at all. In his wildest dreams he does not imagine that "world-changing" ideas, discoveries and inventions are the cumulative result of successive generations of men working in a favorable milieu. On the contrary, he imagines that the preservation of civilization depends entirely upon cultured people like himself, who have the leisure to read many books without understanding them. Each man, he believes, has the power, "within the limits of nature," to determine his own character and destiny; family, education, occupation, social station, wealth or poverty have nothing to do with it. How can one who lives in this ideal vacuum, this abstract world of pure individualism, be expected to understand revolutions, or any other concrete historical process?

The book teems with errors, misunderstandings and confusions. Communism and fascism—there is no real difference between them. Revolution is first defined as occurring "when a faction in the community without sanction of law resorts to armed hostilities in the attempt to constitute itself the governing force in society," and then we are presented with a chapter on the Nazi "revolution"; while as everybody knows, the Nazis came into power when Hindenburg called Hitler to the chancellorship in comformity with the law, just as he had previously called Schleicher, Papen and Brüning to the same post. The French Revolution is said to have come after France's defeat in the Seven Years' War; the intervening victorious war against England, in alliance with the American colonies, is forgotten. The confiscation in that revolution of the lands of the Church and the *émigrés,* is called "socialization of wealth," while as a matter of fact, these lands were sold to bourgeois and peasants. The Reign of Terror is said to have been instituted "in the interest of a planned economy." Who planned what? When a comparatively recent event like the French Revolution can become so distorted in Mr. Martin's pages, we naturally are not surprised to read that the triumph of Julius Caesar was "the first attempt at the dictatorship of the proletariat." And instances of this sort could be multiplied indefinitely.

This hater of all revolutions as the destructive work of a bloodthirsty mob, does not even know how to bolster up his thesis with material that is, as it were, prepared expressly for his purpose. Of the class struggles in ancient Greece he says: "There is not much to learn from the revolutions of ancient Greece. Most of the details are lacking in the accounts that have come down to us." Yet he could find in Thucydides (Books III and IV) as vivid and detailed an account of the bloody revolution that took place in Corcyra in 427 B.C. as he could possibly desire. He could even find there a massacre of prisoners by the democrats that he could parallel with the September massacres in Paris in 1792 A.D. Surely, he would not be prejudiced against this first detailed contemporary account of a revolution by the fact that its author was of the oligarchic party.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

Tramp Steamer

Call Me Ishmael, by Loyd Collins. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.

LOYD COLLINS stands out very well in this first novel: he is a writer who knows how to write, how to keep it down to an even, convincing tone, how to make words do for what a man would think, or see, or what it would taste like to have blood in your mouth and how the stinking food would hit you after twenty-four hours rousing cargo out of a flooded hold. Not cheapening his dialogue with *dis punk, dem t'ings* and other such easy typographical fireworks, he will probably never become famous for his uncanny command of popular diction; but for making his speech patterns carry the strange unmistakable illusion of language, he can take his place among the dozen or so others who are doing it today in English (none of whom, ironically, has ever become famous for an uncanny command of popular diction).

"Call Me Ishmael" is a novel about the crew of some madhouse of a ship, tramping her way all up and down the ocean with a partial cargo of bootleg whiskey. More specially, it is about two of the men, Karil and Irish, and indirectly about the girl Karil had just found and was marrying. Irish left the ship and spent a night with her once after that, and it worried him all the time they were picking up cargo in the Caribbean and pushing over to India, and lying there endlessly at the docks in Kidderpore, with the dead heat folding down over all of them and ill will and suspicion growing up among them like a crop of witchgrass. They were out five months in all, making a half-million or so for the company, all this time working themselves to the bone with the sullen valiance common to seamen; and for these mortal pains in this dangerous business they got twenty-five handsome dollars apiece when the ship paid off. The skipper had six fingers to each great fist, and with these he threw a round dozen men over the side before the end, those who were not easily double-crossed being more easily done away with. And at the end the girl herself was killed in a brawl ashore: she had been mixed up in it with her father, a front for the owners, and she had made the mistake of denouncing the owners. So the captain went serenely back to his ship, his twelve

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blunt fingers done up in fists, and that was absolutely all.

Reading back, I see that I have not said very much about the book. One reason is that the author doesn't give you very much to say, definitely: he works so objectively and with such supreme understatement that his final meaning might be this or might be that. You are not sure where he has been taking you, and suspect that neither is he. Another reason is that wherever he is going eventually, the matters that fill a page always have an overtone that can't be labeled—these words falling from these strange characters seem at times to ring with some significance that is immense beyond the matter-of-fact requirements of a rum-running plot, and that will emerge directly from this confusion of half-seen acts and motives. (You know how it is in a summer when there are storms coming: the sun shines, nothing changes in the heat, but there is a dark promising quality in the air.) Loyd Collins may have had a central comment to make on his material and not got it over, or he may just have had the material and tried to fake a comment; but I'd be inclined to let all that go. These half-truths and dim impulses, of course, are all you see in actual life, and to convey the breathless effect of them in writing takes a certain creative magic that would make any book exciting to read. OTIS FERGUSON.

Speaking of Operations

Fifty Years a Surgeon, by Robert T. Morris. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 347 pages. $3.50.

Memoirs of a Small-Town Surgeon, by John Brooks Wheeler. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 336 pages. $3.

THE NEW era in surgery, made possible through the employment of anesthesia and the discoveries of Pasteur—of all modern men the most beneficent—has been a time when, in the old game of trial and error, hits were being scored at an unprecedented rate. These accomplished surgeons, now ripe in years, look back upon those decades with pride and triumph. They have time for retrospection, now that the glamorous adventure of pathfinding is giving place to the plodding consolidation of gains, to the period of standardization and diffusion.

Morris is a battler. "Boastful by nature and youthfully bumptious" he says he was in early days, and he has kept his youth. Exaggeration he pronounces indispensable to struggle. He likes to carry the day with a brisk, crackling phrase. He praises in surgery the deftness of hand, the quick decisions for which he himself was famous. His story, told with animation and decisiveness, will delight medical men. He flings to the layman the suggestion "You may skip" when he comes to appendicitis—good advice, unless the reader is shrewd enough to see that in regard to chronic appendicitis (which is mostly a myth) the old warrior is plainly in retreat. Morris at times grows philosophical and aphoristic, but scarcely attains disinterested calm. "The General Practitioner," a splendid chapter, even laymen may read with profit and pleasure.

Professor Wheeler, modestly calling himself a small-town surgeon, surveys the same scene with genial wisdom. He leads the reader carefully through technical difficulties and lingers lovingly over days at Vienna and Strasbourg. The episodes of battle with wintry Vermont, of operations by lamplight in remote farmhouses, reveal a man of full stature, one whose memories it is good to share.

W. R. HOUSTON, M.D.

The Supreme Court Carries On

The Twilight of the Supreme Court, by Edward S. Corwin. New Haven: Yale University Press. 254 pages. $2.50.

THIS BOOK is an admirable synthesis of constitutional history and a suggestive (if sometimes unreliable) guide to current constitutional events. It is also, and less happily, a forecast of future constitutional development.

What is this twilight of the Supreme Court that Mr. Corwin is talking about? Viewed in one way, the title summarizes, in a picturesque phrase, a prediction that the Court will be forced to abandon certain of its most harshly criticized positions in the application of due-process and commerce-clause law. Mr. Corwin is convinced of the necessity for recognizing the plenary power of Congress in the regulation of industry. The fact of economic unity, he suggests, automatically resolves such questions of government in favor of Washington. "As between the thesis of dual federalism and that of nationalism, ineluctable forces have chosen."

It is clear, of course, that we have here at most a question of a significant change of decision in the Court and not its twilight; the fact of economic unity, for example, only serves to emphasize the importance of the Court's function in preventing state action from embarrassing national policy. It seems clear also that the question of a change of decision has been oversimplified. Nothing is easier than to agree that Congress must have power to do what has to be done; the arguable questions are questions of degree. By failing to accord to claims for decentralization any validity whatever, Mr. Corwin has cut himself off from the heart of the problem. The probability is also that he has mistakenly estimated the attitude of the Supreme Court.

A different basis for the forecast of decay is suggested by the much discussed chapter on the spending power. Mr. Corwin builds heavily upon the Supreme Court's failure (thus far) to sanction any procedural device for attacking the constitutionality of federal appropriations out of general funds:

> The success of the spending power in eluding all constitutional snares goes far to envelop the entire institution of judicial review, as well as its product, constitutional law, in an atmosphere of unreality, even of futility. With the national government today in possession of the power to expend the social product for any purposes that may seem good to it; the power to make itself the universal and exclusive creditor of private business, with all that this would imply of control; the power to inflate the currency to any extent; the power to go into any business whatever, what becomes of judicial review conceived as a system for throwing about the property right a special protection "against the mere power of numbers" and for perpetuating a certain type of industrial organization?

What indeed? The clear answer is that if judicial review (so conceived) is really thus imperiled, *and for this reason,* the Supreme Court can be relied upon *to discover* "constitutional snares" for the spending power. So, in fact, are the lower federal courts already discovering them in decisions on the T.V.A. and the P.W.A., decisions that qualify or deny almost every one of Mr. Corwin's asserted "powers," decisions that neither he nor anybody else can confidently predict will be reversed. It is a naïve assumption, surely, that draws so large a practical conclusion

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from so abstract a premise—as if one were to find the Achilles heel of the Court in the recognized power of Congress to pack its membership and alter or take away its jurisdiction. Judgment upon the future of this particular tradition of judicial review is not so easy as this. It is bound up with judgment as to the future of American capitalism as a whole, which Mr. Corwin does not discuss, not to mention the success of the Roosevelt experiment, which he seems to take for granted. Nor would an illuminating estimate of the future of the Court confine itself to this particular tradition. Neither one big socialized state nor a federated union of socialized states, it must be remembered, would find it easy to dispense with a supreme judicial tribunal.

HENRY M. HART, JR.

Law Among the Savages

Law and Order in Polynesia, by Ian Hogbin. Introduction by Bronislaw Malinowsky. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 368 pages. $3.50.

SLOWLY, the anthropological outlook is broadening our concepts. A generation ago it was still customary in scientific circles to speak of savages without religion. Later, theorists of politics spoke of societies before the origin of the state. This scientific snobbery was rooted in narrow definitions. A more liberal attitude soon learned to make room for primitive religion as well as for a prehistoric state. The study of primitive law, similarly illumined, is coming round to the same conclusion.

Here, Malinowsky's "Law and Custom in Savage Society" paved the way. In opposition to Post, Kohler, Vinogradov and others, Malinowsky insisted that all societies had their legal forms. The mechanisms and concepts of historic jurisprudence may be lacking among primitives, but there is an organic law embedded in social functioning that is no less real and significant. This primitive law, according to Malinowsky, is rooted in the principle of reciprocity, the rule of give and take. Nothing is given or done for nothing. Should reciprocation be withheld, there is trouble. Society, public opinion, rises in protest. These ideas Malinowsky restates in an introduction to Hogbin's book.

Hogbin's study is founded on his personal researches among the Polynesian natives of Ontong Java (not "Ontong, Java" as the cover has it), an island complex situated north of the Melanesian Solomon Islands. As a faithful representative of the "functional school" of anthropology, the author conducted his investigations and presents his material with an eye on performance rather than structure. The result is a very vivid portrayal of this primitive community. Throughout, the principle of coöperation or reciprocity is in evidence. The wife is dependent on the husband for fish, but the latter looks to her for his supply of cocoanuts. The uncle (mother's brother) exacts a modicum of obedience from his nephew, but in return he takes care of the latter, instructs him and offers protection. On numerous ceremonial and social occasions presents are distributed, but never without expectation of suitable returns. Even the powers of chiefs or kings are embraced under this principle. They may be vast, but are limited by consideration of fairness and justice. A lazy man may for a certain time thrive on the bounty of others; but presently he finds himself isolated, ostracized. He must do his share of the work if part of the returns are to be his.

Among the many functional groupings described by the author one will be of special interest to anthropologists. He calls it the "joint family," which among the Ontong

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Javanese comprises a group related through paternal descent. Such a group will hold individuals belonging to not more than six generations, with the oldest male as its head. The functions of this paternally organized group bear a striking resemblance to the "maternal families" of the Iroquois Indians. The proprietary, ceremonial and social prerogatives of the two kinds of groupings—one in our Great Lakes region, the other in Ontong Java—are almost identical.

As is not surprising in a somewhat pioneering effort, the author's conclusions at times outrun the concrete evidence presented. This, however, is but a slight blemish upon an excellently performed task. Hogbin's book constitutes a worthy companion to several equally notable studies given us by the functionalists.

ALEXANDER GOLDENWEISER.

Books in Brief

Turkey in the Straw, by MacKinlay Kantor. New York: Coward-McCann. 90 pages. $2.

THESE narratives of the Civil War and of the prairies, with their glimpses of blue and butternut-clad men, their celebration of narrow episodes and special characters, are called "American Ballads and Primitive Verse," and they possess the stiffness and dash that belong to backwoods improvisation. For all its apparent simplicity, this is a fairly difficult effect to attain. But this poet's achievement is interesting not so much in that he has used a tradition as in that he has exceeded it. He has a complex astringency of his own, and at his best, as in the poem that begins "Lyman Dillon is ploughing tonight," he creates those archetypal images for which one turns to poetry and which are rarely found in the homespun ballad. One could wish that Mr. Kantor had not used his several references to elves, since for some reason elves have never become truly domesticated in this country. His ghosts—and his poems are mainly of ghosts—are better. They have a lean air of life. C. R.

The Hill of Lies, by Heinrich Mann. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

The Muirs' translation is excellent, but can do nothing to stop this novel from being a failure of the first water. After diverse amorous adventures, Marie, a farm laborer's daughter, finds herself with child. The father of this baby and his sister have a frustrated incestuous love for each other. The sister contrives to capture, if for one night only, Marie's true love, a sailor lad, and eventually kidnaps the baby. But virtue triumphs: Marie finally gets back both sailor and baby. A less pleasant set of wooden homunculi, every single one either a knave or a fool, was seldom found between book covers. In endeavoring to turn out another "Blue Angel," Heinrich Mann has sadly overreached himself. And since this novel first appeared four years ago, even the alibi of the transplanted exile doesn't apply. B. F.

South to Cadiz, by H. M. Tomlinson. New York: Harper and Brothers. 195 pages. $2.

In many ways these essays, which are concerned with a journey from England to Spain at the time of the London Economic Conference, are the quintessence of Tomlinson, a man with a mind clearly lighted by the lamps of reason, who feels acutely the late (or nearest) devastation of the War and the gripe of social decay. In Spain amid the relics of the past and the impedimenta of the present he enunciates beliefs—in art, in democracy—by means of an easy limpid prose whose exigencies only occasionally lead

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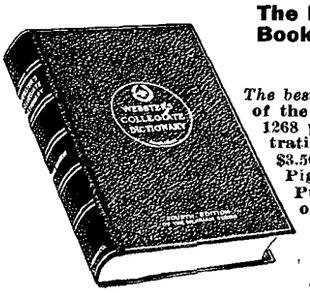

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him astray from his own intended thoughts. The whole volume, closing as it does with notes on a trip to Walden, and a tribute to Thoreau, is very like a volume that an enlightened pagan, believing, sadly enough, in no immediate shibboleths, might have written amid the jangling elements of the fourth or fifth century after Christ. The book is moving and at times profound. K. W.

The Lummi Indians of Northwest Washington, by Bernhard J. Stern. New York: Columbia University Press. 126 pages. $2.

This monograph on a tribe of American Indians located in the region of Puget Sound is numbered XVII in the series edited by Franz Boas, "Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology." Dr. Stern divides his work into three sections, the first dealing with the cycle of life, the second with the tribal culture, the third with the legend and lore of the Lummi Indians. The account is full and the writing decidedly adequate, particularly so with regard to the use of the historical present tense, which vivifies the detail of factual material. But, true to the tradition of American anthropology, Dr. Stern refrains from any interpretation of the society he is studying. In spite of the critical apparatus he has shown in other work, he has in this instance merely "done" another primitive tribe.

G. G. S.

Contributors

JOHN STRACHEY is now facing deportation from the United States on the charge of being a Communist. He is the author of various books, including "The Coming Struggle for Power" and "The Nature of Capitalist Crisis."

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The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Constance Rourke, Barthold Fles, Kenneth White and George Simpson (G. G. S.).

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